

THE MAGAZINE FOR GUYS WHO LOVE GAMES!

PC accelerator

bigger, better, faster games

WORLD EXCLUSIVE | **REVIEW & STRATEGY**

HALF-LIFE!





12 PAGES ON THE GAME OF THE YEAR ...

40+ NEW SCREENS

VOLUME 01 NO 04
DECEMBER 1998

! WARNING !

CONTENTS WILL EXPLODE VIOLENTLY UPON OPENING: YOU'VE BEEN WARNED

The gratuitous pictures of half-naked women inside should not be used for medicinal purposes

X-WING: ALLIANCE

STAR WARS FLY THE BAD MF!

EXCLUSIVE REVIEWS

KLINGON HONOR GUARD, DELTA FORCE, SHOGO, JAIL BABES, and more!

imagine MEDIA WITH PASSION

$7.99US $8.99CAN

12

0 71486 01059 3

With the POWER of 3Dfx,

Looking Glass Studios and EIDOS brought Garret out of the shadows...



Original Garret concept sketch, 1997.



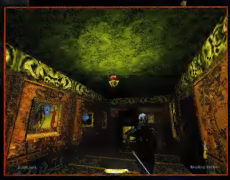
Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 24

Garret, stealthy star of Thief: The Dark Project, 1998

If you play the Best Games

Lighting and graphic effects are key when your only way to survive is hiding in the shadows. So Looking Glass Studios and Eidos joined forces with 3Dfx to create stunning, stealthy effects for Thief: The Dark Project. The result is an incredible immersive experience that will forever alter your idea of first-person action gaming.





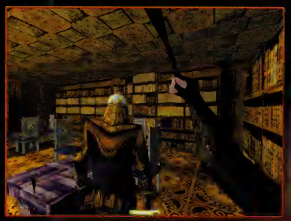


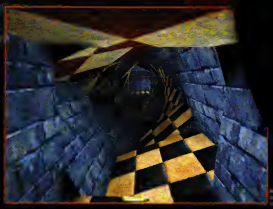
3Dfx Interactive

www.3dfx.com

Use the Best Hardware.







EIDOS INTERACTIVE

www.eidosinteractive.com

LOOKING GLASS STUDIOS

www.lglass.com

Eidos Interactive is a registered trademark of Eidos, PLC. © 1998 Eidos. Thief: The Dark Project is a registered trademark of Looking Glass Studios. © 1998 Looking Glass Studios. System Shock, Ultima, and Underworld are registered trademarks of Electronics Arts and/or its wholly owned subsidiaries. All rights reserved. © 1998 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. The 3Dfx Interactive logo is a registered trademark of 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. in the USA and in other select countries © 1998 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. and Eidos Interactive. All rights reserved.



MATURE 17+

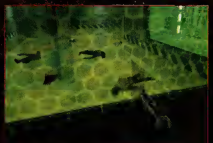
MONOLITH PRODUCTIONS
www.lith-chosen.com

WINDOWS 95

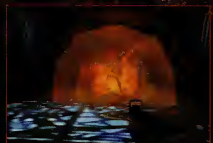
GT Interactive Software
www.gtinteractive.com

Blood II: The Chosen and LithTech and the "3D logo are trademarks of Monolith Productions, Inc., Kirkland, WA. The game engine and tools development technology licensed by Monolith Productions, Inc. Blood II: The Chosen is published and distributed by GT Interactive Software (Europe) Limited. GT is a registered trademark of the Microsoft Corp. GT is a trademark and the GT Games logo and GT logo are registered trademarks of GT Interactive Software Corp. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies.

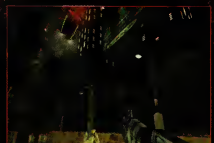
Available now at your local retailer. Order direct at www.gtstore.com or call 1-800-610-GTIS.



Take bloodshed to the next level with new 3D engine and fully modeled 3D characters!



30+ screaming fast, totally immersive and completely bloodsoaked levels!



Explore vast, vivid, environments- and destroy everything in sight!



Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 29

Microsoft



Meet the Microsoft® Sidewinder™ Force Feedback Wheel and the Force Feedback Pro joystick. Feel the force of every game action in the palm of your hand, thanks to a colossal 16 bit, 25 MHz processor. And with Game Controller Software you can program buttons to the actions in the games. Did we mention you can use them with over eighty games? Buckle up. You're in for a bumpy ride.

Microsoft Urban Assault™ comes free with the Force Feedback Pro.
Microsoft Monster Truck Madness™ 2 and Microsoft CART Precision Racing™ come free

© 1998 All rights reserved. Microsoft, Monster Truck Madness, Precision Racing, SideWinder and Urban Assault are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.


...THE WHEEL RATTLE IN YOUR HANDS AS YOU CRUSH ROCKS WITH YOUR MONSTER TIRES
...THE JOYSTICK SNAP WITH THE IMPACT OF A ROCKET RIPPING INTO YOUR TANK
...THE INTOXICATING POWER OF BEING TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY IMMERSED IN THE ACTION
Force Feedback Wheel
Force Feedback Pro Joystick
with the Wheel.
MICROSOFT
SIDEWINDER
Want more? Visit microsoft.com/SideWinder
Go to http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411: Product Number 62

CONTENTS

DECEMBER 98

FEATURES



22

WORLD EXCLUSIVE: HALF-LIFE REVIEWED

The best game this year? The long-awaited *Half-Life* is upon us and PCXL is the first to give you an honest opinion of how the game plays. Is it really all that?



33

50 PERFECT GIFTS

Find out what you really want for Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwaanza, etc. The rundown of gaming gifts and nongaming delights is put together as only PCXL can



48

GAMES YOU REALLY WANT

But were afraid to ask for. PCXL has some suggestions that are quite shocking and creative, but mostly just really, really disturbing

DEPARTMENTS

TECHPHILES 43

Find out what 3D card is right for your system. The math and science department at John's Hopkins has teamed with PCXL to make a flowchart likely to change your life

PLAY BY PLAY 107

NHL 99, *Madden 99*, *NBA Live 99*, and *VR Baseball 2000* (it had to be different, I guess)

ONLINE ARENA 114

Find out the best places to play *Rainbow Six*, *Quake II*, and *StarCraft*. Bonus strategies on how to cause some real online trouble

STRATEGY 118

The very first strategy on *Half-Life* gets you going on the best game this year. The game is deep, but we are here to help

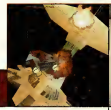
X-TRA 124

News you can trust, from people you shouldn't. Glamour in the Slammer — Behind the scenes at PCXL — intern application — Kenny dies for good — the lovely, leathered-up Nikki — 3Dfx: "I Will Survive" — What the hell do '70s sitcoms and games have in common? — The skinny on *Quake III* — and as many pictures of beautiful sexpots as we could fit

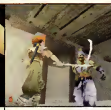


ON THE COVER (Guest-written by Chris Charla, editor in chief of *Next Generation*): What can I say? I look at this cover and I think, "Whoah, PCXL got the *Half-Life* story." If I didn't get PCXL for free from that little minx Carrie, I would buy this mag in a heartbeat.

PREVIEWS



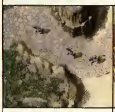
55 X-WING: ALLIANCE
It's all about the Bad MF and how you get to fly it around



62 PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D
The Prince goes 3D and other princes get their just due



66 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
Three years in the making — plus other licensing gold mines



70 TOTAL ANNIHILATION: KINGDOMS
Much more than just an add-on pack



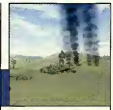
74 SHADOW COMPANY
Rainbow Six goes RTS and the A-Team is fondly remembered



78 OUTCAST
They are French and smarmy, but damn their game looks good

REVIEWS

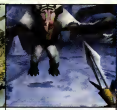
81 You need a little guidance on where to spend those gaming dollars. First stop, the reviews



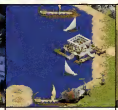
82 DELTA FORCE
The first *Rainbox Six* clone clears its own territory



85 ENEMY INFESTATION
It's like an episode of "MacGyver" without Richard Dean Anderson



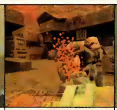
86 KLINGON HONOR GUARD
Unreal engine, world-exclusive review, but where is the honor in this?



88 RISE OF ROME
The right way to do an add-on pack. Man we hate saying nice things about Microsoft



90 SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOR DIVISION
LithTech is a reality and you won't believe the carnage



92 QUAKE II: GROUND ZERO
Mare Quake II is always a good thing, right?



94 DOMINANT SPECIES
Everything that *Rainbox Six* wasn't. (That's not good)



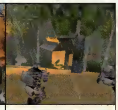
95 DETHKARZ
This game is about cars and death. Duh



98 WING COMMANDER PROPHECY: SECRET OPS
The secret is out, and you'd better get it while it's free



99 RAGE OF MAGES
It's no *Shogo*, but then it's no *Get Medieval* either



100 SPEC OPS: RANGER TEAM BRAVO
As good as the first game should have been, but late



103 BARRAGE
You know it's what happens when a bunch of things come bearing down at one time



104 GUNMETAL
We were rooting for Mad Genius, but a rushed product is exactly that



CELEBRITY APPEARANCES
The Brady girls, Carmen Elektra, the Golden Girls, The Artist Formerly Known As Prince, Prince Charles, Jell Babes, Heather Locklear, the Bartel twins, the Olsen twins, the Judds, Nia Taylor, Krissy Taylor, Will Smith, Christopher Walken, Samuel Jackson, The A-Team, John Belushi, Prince Albert, Phil Hartman, Phil Hartman's Wife, Bill Bixby, Lyle and Eric Menendez, Monica Lewinsky (aka dead horse we are beating), Milla Jovovich, Gina Gershon, Tha Gu-Goo, and many, many more

COLUMNS

EDITOR'S LETTER 14
Mike seeks more approval and tells you what to get the staff for Christmas

FIRST PERSON 140
When It's Done My Ass! This month Dan takes on Mike in a debate on the "when it's done" phenomenon

THE DISC

16
Eighteen demos, 14 new deathmatch maps, six patches, five golden rings, three benchmarking utilities, one WorldCraft 1.6 demo, and a partridge in a pear tree

DREAMWORKS INTERACTIVE

THE LAWS OF NATURE AND SOMEONE IS

"THE MOST ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY WE'VE EVER SEEN IN A PC GAMING TITLE!" - *COMPUTER GAMING WORLD*







PHENOMENAL PHYSICS-BASED GAME PLAY: IF IT CAN HAPPEN IN REAL LIFE, IT CAN HAPPEN HERE.

HAVE BEEN BROKEN.
GOING TO PAY.

Trespasser™ & © 1998 U.S. Computer Ent.ssem 1998 DW. All Rights Reso ved

YOU ARE ALONE, WASHED ASHORE ON INGEN'S REMOTE RESEARCH ISLAND, SITE B, IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE LOST WORLD EXPEDITION. BEFORE YOU LIES A DENSE, TROPICAL JUNGLE FILLED WITH PREHISTORIC CARNIVORES THAT ARE VERY MUCH ALIVE. YOUR ONLY CHANCE OF SURVIVAL IS TO USE YOUR WITS TO BATTLE THE RELENTLESS WILD-LIFE WITH ANYTHING YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON.



TRESPASSER™

THE EVOLUTION OF 1ST PERSON 3-D GAMING.

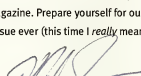
THE LOST WORLD JURASSIC PARK

WWW.TRESPASSER.COM

DO WE AMUSE YOU?

Are we f-ing clowns? The answer is yes and no. If you've been reading this mag since its inception, then you already realize that we are a bit different. If this is your first time, you'll know it soon enough. We try to have fun with the magazine, the game biz, and with life in general. Our wise-ass comments, insane sidebars, and slightly off-kilter folio fillers™ are meant to keep you entertained. But when it comes to games, hardware, and jail babes, we are as serious as a heart attack. Just because we like to have fun doesn't mean you can't trust our opinion. In fact, I dare you to find another magazine out there with a more honest approach to reviews and previews. What makes this magazine such a pleasure to work on are the people who create it; every one of us is a hardcore gamer who loves playing games. When you read our reviews, you know the games have been played to death and we won't give you any BS.

This month we present world-exclusive reviews on *Half-Life*, *Klingon Honor Guard*, and *Delta Force*. Why? Because we can. This whole issue is designed to make your holidays better. After reading our reviews, 50 Perfect Gifts, Jail Babes extravaganza, and TechPhiles section you will be armed with all you need to make sure no one buys you some piece-of-crap game or hardware. If your religion forbids celebrating Christmas, then change religions — um, I mean, it is still useful information (and enjoy the holidays). As always, we want to hear from YOU! Why? Mostly because we are sad and lonely, but also to continue improving the magazine. Prepare yourself for our best issue ever (this time I *really* mean it).



MIKE SALMON, *Editor in Chief*

THE TEAM

EDITOR IN CHIEF



MIKE SALMON

LIKELY TO SPEND THE HOLIDAYS—› Practicing indoor sports and sipping on cognac
WHAT HE WANTS FOR CHRISTMAS—› Two Interns and/or two Real Dolls
FAVORITE TV SHOW—› *"VIP" (Just get Pam wet is all I ask)*
BABE-O-RAMA CANDIDATE OF CHOICE—› Alyssa Mi — dare I mean, my fiancée Laurie Espinoza, yeah that's it
NOW PLAYING—› *Half-Life, Rainbow Six, Shogo, Ground Zero*

EXECUTIVE EDITOR



ROB SMITH

LIKELY TO SPEND THE HOLIDAYS—› Surrendering to his newly moved-in girlfriend's every whim
WHAT HE WANTS FOR CHRISTMAS—› More time with Vegas showgirl Kelli (with an i), with whom he shared one magical night (not to mention $350)
FAVORITE TV SHOW—› English foot-ball (er, soccer)
BABE-O-RAMA CANDIDATE OF CHOICE—› Audrey Hepburn or Kelli
NOW PLAYING—› *Half-Life, Delta Force, Rainbow Six*

MANAGING EDITOR



CARRIE SHEPHERD

LIKELY TO SPEND THE HOLIDAYS—› On some other magazine that isn't nearly as cool and doesn't *really* love her
WHAT SHE WANTS FOR CHRISTMAS—› A vacation on a tropical island ... far, far away
FAVORITE TV SHOW—› "Party of Five"
BABE-O-RAMA CANDIDATE OF CHOICE—› Gina Gershon (mmm ... *Bound*)
NOW PLAYING—› With the idea of an all-female love triangle

ASSOCIATE EDITOR



DAN EGGER

LIKELY TO SPEND THE HOLIDAYS—› Corresponding with favorite jail babe(s)
WHAT HE WANTS FOR CHRISTMAS—› Early parole for jail babe Sara
FAVORITE TV SHOW—› "OZ" (or "Sonny & Marie")
BABE-O-RAMA CANDIDATE OF CHOICE—› Jail babe Tiny
NOW PLAYING—› With the idea of becoming a warden and punishing "bad" girls

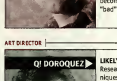
DISC/ASSISTANT EDITOR



ED "SLASH" LEE

LIKELY TO SPEND THE HOLIDAYS—› Holiday, what holiday? Was I asleep during that meeting?
WHAT HE WANTS FOR CHRISTMAS—› Buffy
FAVORITE TV SHOW—› "Costello," "Private Benjamin," "Joanie Loves Chachi"
BABE-O-RAMA CANDIDATE OF CHOICE—› Buffy (Sarah Michelle Gellar)
NOW PLAYING—› *Rainbow Six, NHL 99, StarCraft, Shogo*

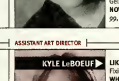
ART DIRECTOR



Q! DOROQUEZ

LIKELY TO SPEND THE HOLIDAYS—› Researching various "artistic" techniques and styles on the web
WHAT HE WANTS FOR CHRISTMAS—› Copy to be in on Fing time!
FAVORITE TV SHOW—› "Conan O'Brien" *(Hey, what's he doing home at that time?)*
BABE-O-RAMA CANDIDATE OF CHOICE—› Buffy (Sarah Michelle Gellar)
NOW PLAYING—› With the idea of an all-female love triangle (mmm ... *Bound*)

ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR



KYLE LeBOEUF

LIKELY TO SPEND THE HOLIDAYS—› Fixing our PCs
WHAT HE WANTS FOR CHRISTMAS—› A woman to love ... or whatever
FAVORITE TV SHOW—› "Friends" *(He likes Phoebe — go figure)*
BABE-O-RAMA CANDIDATE OF CHOICE—› Milla Jovovich/Aghora, go figure)
NOW PLAYING—› *StarCraft, Carmageddon II, Future Cop*

CONTACTS

Caroline Simpson-Bint publisher

EDITORIAL

Mike Salmon editor in chief
Rob Smith executive editor
Carrie Shepherd managing editor
Dan Egger associate editor
Ed "Slash" Lee disc/assistant editor

Contributing writers: Jason D'Aprile, Chris Hudak, Steve Klett, John Lee, Marc Saltzman, Don St. John
Emergency copy editor: Cathy Lu
Technology editor: Joel Durham

ART

Quintin Doroquez art director
Kyle LeBoeuf assistant art director

Contributing designer: Gerry Serrano

ADVERTISING/MARKETING

Mike Rogers national sales manager, ext. 150
Andy Swanson regional sales manager, ext. 749
Erik "Killer" Piller marketing manager, ext. 146
Dawnde Wallen account executive, ext. 103

PRODUCTION

Richard Lesovoy production director
Glenn Sadin production coordinator

CIRCULATION

Stephanie Flanagan subscription director
Bruce Eldridge newsstand director
Thea Selby newsstand manager
Peggy Mores fulfillment manager
Amy Nibbi direct mail manager
Kristi Chezum fulfillment specialist
Ciara Pon direct marketing specialist
Quyen Nguyen distribution marketing coordinator

PC ACCELERATOR

	Editorial	Advertising
vox	415-468-4684	415-468-4684, ext. 150
fax	415-468-4686	415-468-4686
email	letters@pcxl.com	mrogers@pcxl.com

Imagine Media
BRANDS OF WEB VERTICALS

Chris Anderson CEO
Tom Valentino vice president/CFO
Holly Klingel vice president/circulation
Charles Schug general counsel

IMAGINE GAMES DIVISION

Jonathan Simpson-Bint president
(PC Accelerator, Gomes Business, PSM, Next Generation, Imagine Games Network, PC Gomer, The Den: Daily Entertainment Network)

IMAGINE DIGITAL DIVISION

Mark Gross president
(Business 2.0, ChickClick, MacAddict, Maximum PC, PowerStudents Network)

Imagine Media is aimed at people who have a passion. A passion for games. For business. For computers. Or for the Internet. Those are passions we share.

Our goal is to feed your passion with the greatest magazines, web sites, and CD-ROMs imaginable.

We love to innovate, we love to have fun, and we have a cast-iron rule always to deliver spectacular editorial value. That means doing whatever it takes to give you the information you need. With any luck, we'll even make you smile sometimes ...

Thanks for joining us.

PC ACCELERATOR. ISSN# 1521-7795 is published monthly by Imagine Media, Inc., 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005, USA. Newsstand distribution is handled by the Curtis Circulation Company. Subscriptions: One year basic rate (12 issues): US: $20; Canada: $34; Foreign: $44 prepaid, US funds only. Canadian price includes postage and GST (GST#R126220668). For customer service, call 800-333-0830. In US, 415-468-2500. For back issues, call 800-865-2240. POSTMASTER: send changes of address to PC ACCELERATOR, PO Box 51080, Boulder, CO 80322.

Entire contents © 1998, Imagine Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprod uction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. Products, characters, screenshots, etc. named and shown in these pages are trademarks or trademarks of their respective companies. Imagine Media, Inc. is not affiliated with the companies or products covered in PC ACCELERATOR. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned or acknowledged. Printed in the USA.

Anyone who can supply a staff member with his or her gift of choice gets a free subscription to PC ACCELERATOR. Failure, and a box of games we don't want or have two copies of.

Standard mail enclosed in the following edition: 4, 41, 42, 43, 47, 51

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage Paid
Wasecu, MN
Permit No. 38

Rigor Motorist



Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 61

THE LOVE DISC



Our disc comes with a scrolling interface, which is operated by moving the mouse over the screen. If this is too complicated or you lack the motor skills, then the bar on the left can be used as well. Click left on the mouse to select items and click left again (on the image) to return to the previous screen. If you've ever installed a game, then the rest should be elementary.

REQUIREMENTS: WINDOWS 95, PENTIUM 133MHZ, 32MB RAM, DIRECTX 5.0, MOUSE, 100% SOUND BLASTER COMPATIBLE CARD

THE DISC MINI-FAQ

Q: Why is my disc not working under Windows 98?

A: At this point, the disc is fully Windows 98 compatible. However, some backward-compatibility issues could remain with some of the software on the disc. So blame those Microsoft bastards, not us!

Q: Why are the colors screwed up? You idiots!

A: Make sure your desktop is set to 16-bit color or higher before running.

Q: Why is my CD cracked in half? You f%$#@g idiots!

A: No good answer to that one. If this happens, or if the disc is missing, give your letter carrier a good talking to and call 800-333-3810 to get a replacement.

EXCITING AND NEW

The Love Disc promises something for everyone

On location from San Francisco's Tonga Room, we are pleased to have Jack Jones as this month's guest artist. Take it away, Jack! Waitress, will you please bring me another piña colada? Thanks, babe!

Disc, exciting and new /Come aboard. It's expecting you
Disc, life's sweetest re-ward /Let it run, it crashes back to you /The Love Disc — soon will be making another spin /The Love Disc — promises something far everyone
Set o course for demos /Your mind on a new patch /Disc won't hurt anymore ...
Yes DISC! It's DISC!! /(It's the Love Disc-oh! It's the Love Disc-oh!)

Thank you! What a crowd! See you next month!

DEMO	PATCHES	TOOLS	MAPS	A/V	STRATEGY	RATING		
D						9	NHL 99	Current office standings: 1) Ed 2) Q! 3) Mike 4) Erik 5) Dan *[These are lies from Ed's mouth ... err ... keyboard — Mike]*
D							POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING	If someone asks you if you are a god, you say yes!
	◈	◈	◈	◈		9	UNREAL	The 2.17 beta patch, an FPS timedemo, and tons of new maps
D						6	BARRAGE	Give your new 3D board a workout with this purty tech demo
D							VIPER RACING	A licensed racer that lets you actually wreck cars? No way!!
D							POWERSLIDE	It's finally here after months of empty promises
	◈					9	STARCRAFT	Still going strong. Here's the 1.03 patch
D							THE FIFTH ELEMENT	This was that French movie with the Band-Aid chick
D						2	DOMINANT SPECIES	See for yourself how weird this game is
D							VIGILANCE	After three months of empty promises, here it is!
	◈					8	DESCENT FREESPACE	Updates to v1.04
D							SIN	This updated demo has two new DM maps for ya
		◈				10	HALF-LIFE	WorldCraft 1.6 shareware
D						8	DETHKARZ	Australian for arcade racer
D						7	MADDEN 99	Fast arcadey fun that has a little in common with real football
D							FUTURE COP: LAPD	Beat up on minorities — er, play an LAPD officer
	◈					8	BATTLEZONE	Updates to v1.4
D						7	ENEMY INFESTATION	It'll make you wet your pants — it's that scary
		◈	◈	◈		9	QUAKE II	Two benchmarking utilities and five DM maps
D						7	SPEARHEAD	Kill innocent Libyans (that is a classic example of an oxymoron) in a big-ass tank
D						7	RAGE OF MAGES	A Russian RPG/strategy game. Now that's mass appeal
	◈					8	FORSAKEN	The latest patch fixes a ton of stuff
D							ESCAPE OOT	Can it overcome the lame title factor?
D						8	DELTA FORCE	Updated demo has multiplayer support
D							COLIN MCRAE RALLY	Who Colin McRae is we don't know, but he's got a game
	◈						3DFX DRIVERS	New drivers for Voodoo 2 that run faster under Direct3D

→ As always, your feedback is welcomed! Write to discedItor@pcxl.com.







The "Love Boat" theme in its entirety can be found on "Greatest Hits of Jack Jones"


ONE
UNIVERSE
JOIN US
TWO
STARS



2471

Sentinel Cybertronix unveils Prometheus.

2602

The Fire. *The Cybrids turn on humanity and destroy the Age of Hope. Earthsiege begins.*

2605

A series of defeats forces Earth's people to withdraw support for the fledgling colonies on Luna, Mars, Venus, and outlying mining stations. The colonists suffer massive casualties.

2627

End of The Fire. *The daring destruction of Prometheus's moon base fails to uncover signs of the Dark Intellect ITSELF.*





Inception of the Great Human Empire. Petresun I crowned Emperor.

2652

2800

The Empire and the Cybrids have amassed huge armadas, but no one really knows the extent of the buildup.

Martian rebels discover advanced alien technology which shifts the balance of power. Rebels become a legitimate challenge to the Empire.

2826

2829

Hostilities break out on Mars and Venus. The Emperor unleashes the Imperial Fleet to crush the rebellion. The Cybrids seize the opportunity and launch a massive invasion armada. STARSIEGE *begins.*



"Clearly the frontrunner in the coming industry-wide mech war..."
– OGR.com



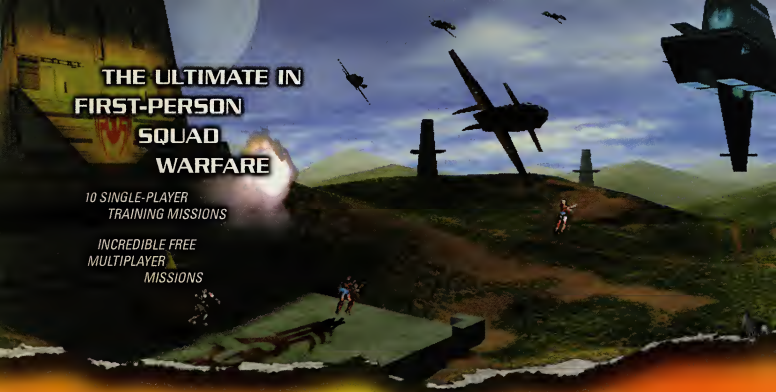
JOIN US.

WWW.STARSIEGE.COM

Dynamix
A SIERRA COMPANY

© 1998 Sierra On-Line, Inc. All rights reserved. ® and TM designate trademarks of, or licensed to Sierra On-Line, Inc

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 55



2832

STARSIEGE ends.

3350

Meta-jumpgate discovered to be part of a network of interstellar gates. The Diaspora begins. Humanity begins to spread throughout the galaxy. "Those Who Jumped," the first people travelling through the jumpgate, forsake the security of the Great Human Empire to journey into the unknown.

3400

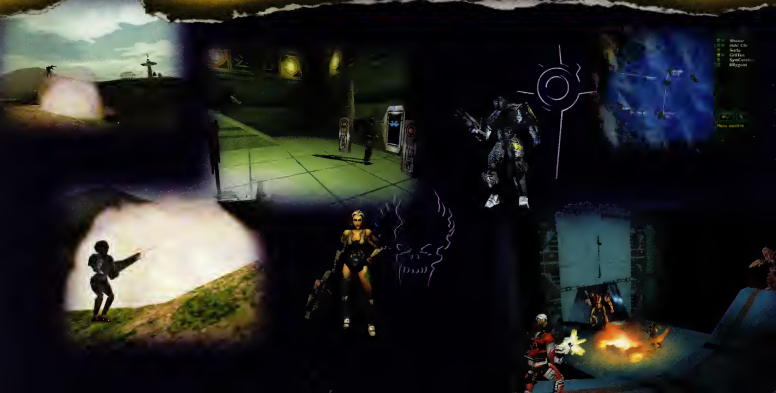
Settlers refer to themselves as a "tribe," the Children of the Phoenix. They claim to follow the teachings of the renowned warrior Harabec Weathers, hero of the Cybrid Wars.

3450

A powerful force of Imperial Knights, the Blood Eagle, appear in tribe space to subdue the Children of the Phoenix for the Great Human Empire. The conflict fractures the Children, as groups break away to form new tribes. This event becomes known as The Splintering.

3455

The Starwolf tribe forms, supposedly founded by renegades from the Children of the Phoenix and Blood Eagle.





Tribal culture is now in a perpetual state of war. The Blood Eagle, far from their homes for decades, have come to consider themselves a "tribe." Finding HERCs impossible to maintain, they adopt the flexible armors used by the many tribes.

3480

3530

Formation of the Diamond Sword tribe under the tutelage of the Enlightened Master. Using innovative strategies and striking with precision and economy, the Diamond Sword rapidly carve out a large holding for themselves.

Blood Eagle forces prevail in the Hepta Ourubis system following use of ecocidal weapons. Starwolf losses are high.

3932

3940

Rough census by the Children of the Phoenix shows that of the hundreds of smaller, independent tribes, an "alarming number" have either allied with or agreed to non-aggression pacts with either the Starwolf or Blood Eagle. Already the skirmishes have increased, and bloodfeuds grow more common.



"Out of nowhere comes a game that threatens to surpass both Quake II and Unreal for multiplayer supremacy."

– Next Generation

JOIN US.

WWW.STARSIEGE.COM

© 1998 Sierra On-Line, Inc. All rights reserved. ® and TM designate trademarks of, or licensed to Sierra On-Line, Inc.

Dynamix
A SIERRA COMPANY

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 44

HALF-LIFE







READ ME FIRST!

You want to know all about *Half-Life*, don't you? Of course. So did we. So much in fact we scraped the exclusive first look at the full game. The version of *Half-Life* that we review here is about – we'll from the Gold Master. As such, while the single-player game is totally complete (and reviewed), our build did not contain multiplayer gameplay. The review is of the single-player experience only – we'll be taking a full and closer look at multiplayer (and therefore the complete package) in our next issue.

In playing through the entire game, I encountered just one crash bug. Valve assures me that this has been addressed. I believe them. Other tiny tweaks were being done to fix very occasional graphic glitches (I witnessed two, neither affecting gameplay). We've pushed the boat out to give you a chance to get the scoop on one of the hottest games of the holiday season, so I've promise more to come with the multiplayer information next time.

[IT'S LIFE, JIM, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT]









"I STAGGER TO A DOOR. My scarred, combat veteran's hand pulls it open. I stumble through it into ... daylight? It must be daytime. The telltale noise of the garbage collectors and early morning traffic seeps into my consciousness. I am conscious, I think. My bones ache. Muscles spasm in my hands and arms. My chest is so tight it feels like my rib cage is about to implode. I blink in the light, glad there isn't a mirror at hand, or anyone to witness this pathetic display of shellshock. Yes, definitely shellshock. I look down, expecting to see the charred, dented, and battered remains of my protective HEV suit. It's not there. Instead there are the more familiar jeans and T-shirt. Finally, I realize. I'm not Gordon Freeman; I'm Rob Smith. I just finished *Half-Life*. And I hurt."

Valve bought WorldCraft to design levels and ship with the final product

Killer game!

DEVELOPER →	Valve
PUBLISHER →	Sierra
REQUIRED →	P200, 32MB RAM, 210MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM
IDEAL →	PII 400, 64MB RAM, 412MB hard drive, 8X CD-ROM, Voodoo 2 (SLI)

3D SOUND

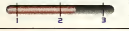
ACCELE-RATED

Half-Life supports OpenGL and incorporates 3Dfx- and PowerVR-specific drivers. There's no doubting the benefit of Voodoo 2 — the game played significantly smoother on Voodoo 2 over Voodoo 1. Those at the top end of the video card food chain with a Voodoo 2 SLI configuration will really reap the benefits.

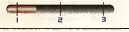
DUAL VOODOO 2 (SLI)



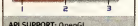
VOODOO 2



VOODOO 1



RIVA TNT



API SUPPORT: OpenGL

After the release of the OEM version of *Half-Life: Day One*, Sierra (pushed heavily by developer Valve) exhibited a heavy-handed and chronically anal attitude to magazines and websites printing stories about the Day One experience. You couldn't mention this, you couldn't show that, and had to get permission for the other. Right royal pain it was. And while my firm belief was that this attitude hindered the fan hype reaching a crescendo, having witnessed the game in its entirety, I understand why they were so protective.

The issue was spoiling the experience. Valve was careful not to show elements of the game that would give away some of the more entertaining scenes. It's like watching all the funny bits of a comedy in the preview, and having nothing left for the movie. Having now witnessed those scenes, I understand why. There *is* a cohesive story, and it *does* make a difference. The reason I mention this up front is to warn you of spoilers. *Half-Life* is definitely an experience best witnessed with no preconceptions. This is what it's about ...

Gordon Freeman is an MIT grad and current research associate at the Black Mesa Research facility. Not a likely gaming hero, but events, well, they lend themselves in the first episode to what were quite accurately called "unforeseen circumstances." The morning journey to work provides background to your work facility and the daily routine with a soothing voiceover. Take note of the journey; using movie-style story pacing, it's full of little shots that make sense much, much later.

The beginning workday is certainly not out of the traditional handbook of how to get involved in first-person shooters. You're not armed, for starters, and remain unarmed for much further than *Unreal*'s intro allowed. But this isn't a problem. Right from the get-go you get to witness the AI at work in a living, breathing, personality-driven workplace. There are fellow scientists to talk to (well, just a few, the same three models being repeated for all the scientists) and security guards. It's all very relaxing — with very subtle, useful pointers to where you should be heading.





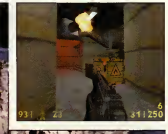
If the Marines can use it, you can, too. Shucks, no rocket launcher.

The game proper starts after the first of some quite exceptional scripted events. Quite literally, all hell broke loose. You survived mainly due to the HEV protective environment suit that you had to grab before getting to the experiment. It's after this event that you suddenly become Gordon Freeman — now events matter, the advice of scientists becomes key, and the whole facility needs rescuing.

Your first introduction to the aliens comes with an up-close look at the HeadCrab. Up close, that is, because the little bastards leap out at your face from anywhere, digging fangs in before repeating the process. They're right out of the *Alien* face hugger, *Unreal* pupae, and *Klingon Honor Guard* scorpion book of how to scare the bejeebers out of gamers for the entirety of a game. They're simple to kill, if you get to see them. You'll develop a spine-tingling awareness of the scuttling noise they make, and hatred of the blood-curdling scream as they leap and, hopefully, die.

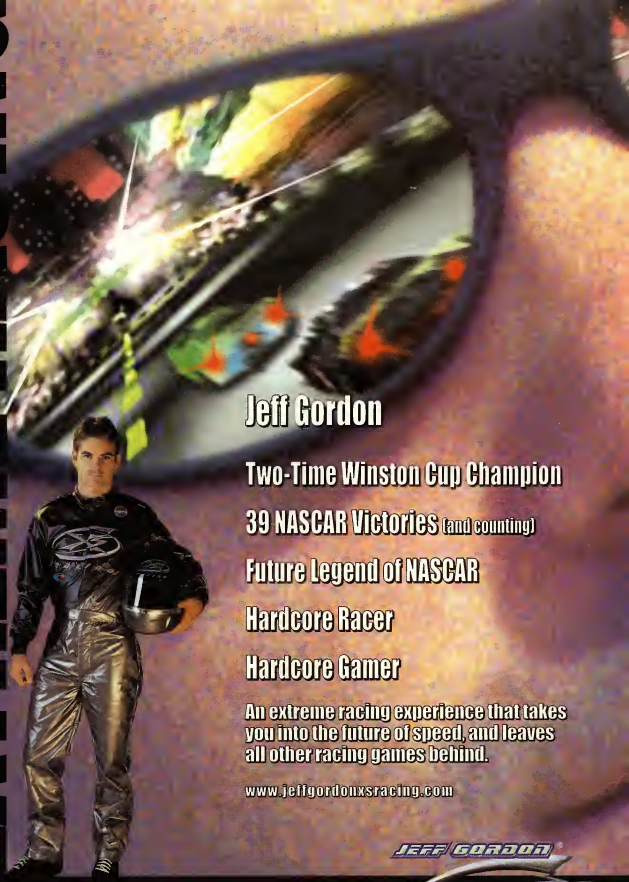
Another lesson is taught very quickly. Security guards are on your side — saving them from the claws of zombies (the hideous *Alien*like creation that results from a HeadCrab gestating on the head of a human) — gives them a chance to save some of your ammo and your skin. Basically two commands are available to them, each accessed with the "use" key that also switches all buttons and pushes all doors. They will either remain where they are, or try to follow you. They may need coaxing, but bring as many as you can — they're experts at getting your back as HeadCrabs drop from the ceilings, or leap from dark corners — after all, it's better them than you.

Scientists are needed at key junctures to open doors secured by a retinal scanner. Be nice to them too; many carry hypodermics to supply you with a quick pick-me-up should you be looking a little fried. (Having said "be ▶ p. 26



Whether you're outdoors or indoors, you never really feel safe do you?

EXTREME RACING



Jeff Gordon

Two-Time Winston Cup Champion

39 NASCAR Victories (and counting)

Future Legend of NASCAR

Hardcore Racer

Hardcore Gamer

An extreme racing experience that takes you into the future of speed, and leaves all other racing games behind.

www.jeffgordonxsracing.com

JEFF GORDON

RACING™

RATING PENDING RP ESRB

Windows® 95

PC CD-ROM

PlayStation®

Developed by Real Sports™

ASC GAMES®

ASC Games™ is a trademark of American Softworks Corporation. © 1998 American Softworks Corporation. Jeff Gordon® XS Racing™ is a trademark of American Softworks Corporation. © 1998 JG MotorSports Inc. Developed by Real Sports. © PepsiCo, Inc. 1998. © 1995 PEG Limited Partnership and PEG 97 Limited Partnership. PlayStation and the PlayStation logos are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Windows® 95 is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corp. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association. All rights reserved.

Jeff Gordon XS Racing Arrives March 1999

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 18

THE TRAINER



Never played a first-person shooter before? No fear. Head to the Hazard Course and let the holographic tutor take you through the basics of moving, jumping, crouching, swimming, and eventually the all-important firing. It introduces you to the HEV suit that can be vital to keeping you alive if you carefully watch what it tells you. Red highlights on the HUD indicate the direction that damage is coming from, be it environmental – from exposed wiring, flaming pipes, radioactive waste, or jets of scorching steam – or more physical – bullets.

Keep your built-in torch switched on when you're in dark passageways. Generally HeadCrabs will make noise before leaping, but I had more than my fair share of pants-soiling encounters by not looking, and not having the torch on.

While it's a dummy run to pros, it's a well-balanced intro to the novices – nice touch.

p. 24 nice," it is great to watch them cringe and run for their lives as you shower bullets around, hard to resist indeed.)

In just the opening (Day One) scenes, a few scripted events really create an atmosphere of terror among the science community. It's not a spoiler to mention one brilliant scene that you can only watch, where a hapless scientist dodges a HeadCrab and triumphantly slams a file cabinet on its carcass. As he celebrates, HeadCrab two decides to put in an appearance – right on his head. It's tragi-comedy and it's terrific. Remember, there are always casualties of war – you can't save everyone. And I'll not spoil with details of the wonderfully subtle appearance of a "government agent/cigarette smoking man" character (à la "The X-Files") that appears ... well, how many times did you spot him?

Valve heavily touted its work on monster AI. Now it is our turn. It doesn't disappoint in the least, with the best example being the human Marinelike commandos who (spoiler alert) appear to want you to stay. These are militarily trained individuals, and god damn them if they don't act like it. It took a while to get over the fact that they weren't just bullet fodder. They move in teams, support each other, and seem to know when to attack and when to retreat to safety. Since they also use the same weapons that you have, they aren't averse to throwing grenades from the combat rifle. You get to take them out with a small array of weapons, but the .357 Magnum is the finest, felling creatures and humans alike with one solid hit.

The Marines also have sandbagged defenses, static heavy caliber guns emplacements, and even rocket launchers all set up to ensure that you don't see this day out.

Now the mission objectives become important. It's not a matter of killing everything in the level and moving on. I can assure you, there are a bunch of creatures here that are way too big to be taken out by conventional means – and lol a mission objective presents itself. The clues for solving these puzzles are extremely well judged. A particularly talkative scientist may throw one morsel of genuinely useful information (if you are patient enough to pick it out from his gibberish), you make the rest up yourself, but I was delighted to discover that when looking for the power generator room, the damn thing was signposted. Obviously, there were a few details in the way that needed taking care of, but I never got lost once. Given the size and scope of some of these levels, and the fact that you have to backtrack on yourself at various points, that is high praise indeed.



That red bit? That means it hurts all over.

Riding the small train (as shown in the assault course) through one sprawling level was excellent. It provided speed, and also protection, but you need to work at side objectives in order to clear your route. Options were always available, and though there are no secret areas, there are a few dark passageways that supplied a few extra health packs and ammo.

Also be sure to take the crowbar to the many stacked boxes. Some will be useful (though those are generally unbreakable) for jumping on. As they smash open, there's tremendous attention to detail as the contents fly out – they might be empty, but before the eye-candy graphics disappear, you'll be able to pick out spades, needles, flasks, boxes, and other random contents that aren't any use.

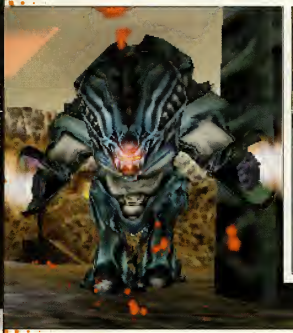
So what about the graphics? Valve incorporated 16-bit color to the 8-bit standard of the *Quake* engine (Valve used parts of *Quake*, *Quake II* and *QuakeWorld* as it saw fit to composite parts of the graphics engine). The effect is excellent. The levels all have a different but subtle look. You really need to look closely to spot how detailed some of the texturing is.

> Sneak up on a Marine, filling him with lead and watching his blood splatter on the wall behind.

The monster models are quite unique (though possibly HP Lovecraft–influenced), and the weapon effects can be dazzling. There really isn't anything like sneaking up on a Marine, filling him with lead, and watching his blood splatter with each bullet hit on the wall behind. Of course, yours splatters too, but with such detail that should you hear the bullet thud and the blood shoot forward, you know someone's behind you. Graphics do enhance play, always an earmark of a great game.

Even the potentially dumb alien creatures exhibit a desire to stay alive while working hard to ensure that you stay dead. The Alien Grunt is raw power and you're not safe from his beelike organic weapon anywhere – they seek you out wherever you're cowering. The assassin blends the scare factor of the HeadCrab with the movement (in silence) of the Marines. I thought it would get a little easier. It got way harder.

But even this deep into Black Mesa, there are still some scientists alive trying to make it possible for you to survive. It shouldn't come as too much of a surprise to learn that these aliens came from somewhere. That somewhere is the border world of Xen – and with p. 28





You've seen it before, so you know it means trouble. Run away. Fast.









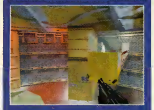






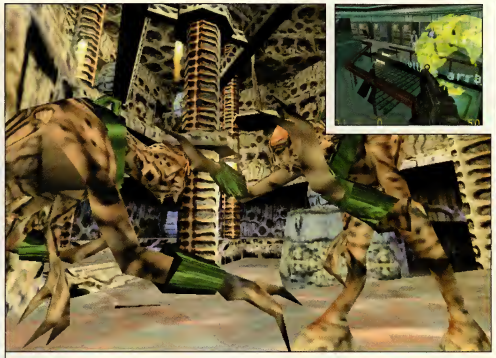
Not even the PCXL offices have these kinds of aliens wandering around. Well, maybe on weekends.

WORLDCRAFT



Half-Life ships with WorldCraft 2.0 level builder. This is the tool that was used at Valve to create the levels in the game — so it's pretty full-featured. PCXL brought you the exclusive version 1.5 on our inaugural issue. Level design really is an art. WorldCraft is a very powerful tool to allow that art to be explored. But while it will be supported with an extensive online documentation, it's something that requires patience and talent to use well.

Certainly if you managed to wade through the unsupported *Unreal* level editor, as supplied by Epic, WorldCraft should prove to be an easier route. In addition to its *Half-Life* level creation, it can also be used to design levels for *Quake II* by importing the textures from that game to be used in place of the *Half-Life* options. Give it a whirl — PCXL will be including some of the best on upcoming CD-ROMS.



Although it may seem different, the scientists do know what they're doing.

p. 26 ▶ the help of scientists to run the machinery, and security guards to fight off the aliens coming through the rift the wrong way, that's where you're heading.

It's been kept under wraps throughout the entire course of development, and I can see why. Xen is a staggeringly beautiful world. Here the artists went to town and created an amazing sight to behold. I was perturbed to see the gameplay hit a console-style platform kilter for a while (which was still pretty cool with the thinner air creating more ethereal movement physics) — but that's only a preamble to confrontations with a few of the bosses you've already encountered. It still won't prepare you for Gonarch, the weird four-legged, no-headed creature that emerged in some early artwork for the game. It certainly won't prepare you for the final confrontation. As one scientist rightly predicted, there's a single powerful being at the center, and it needs killing.

You'll understand the finger-aching, scarred, battered feeling I experienced should you ever manage it. It's a titanic battle that perfectly epitomizes the titanic experience of *Half-Life*. But this isn't a sinking ship more a genuine step forward for a genre too focused on me-too design.

I do have to throw in a couple of caveats (naturally). Most important is the loading sequence. Since it's not a set level-by-level design, *Half-Life* loads in sections of the map periodically (sometimes just a minute or so after a previous load). These loads do take a fair few seconds (depending on your system), and while I accept that they are necessary from a technical standpoint, they can pull you a little bit back to PC reality at times when you're fully immersed. Weapon auto-targeting also caused occasional problems when trying to fine-tune a hit — but I guess the number of times I was thankful for it probably made up even for that. And, well, that's just about it — except perhaps that it was over a little too quickly (but there are always the harder difficulty settings).

> ***Half-Life* is an unforgettable experience — and one that every gamer should witness.**

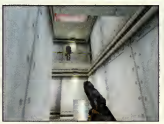
Kudos to Valve for sticking it out until it was really ready to be unveiled. *Half-Life* is an unforgettable experience — and one that every gamer should witness. ▶

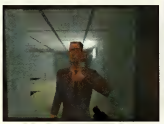
— ROB SMITH ***would now like to get his full life back.***











What's this guy's deal? And why doesn't he look worried?

GRAPHICS
Generally excellent, with Xen being some of the best ever.

SOUND
Wonderfully 3D, and absolutely imperative to the game.

DEPTH
I wasn't leaving until it was done.

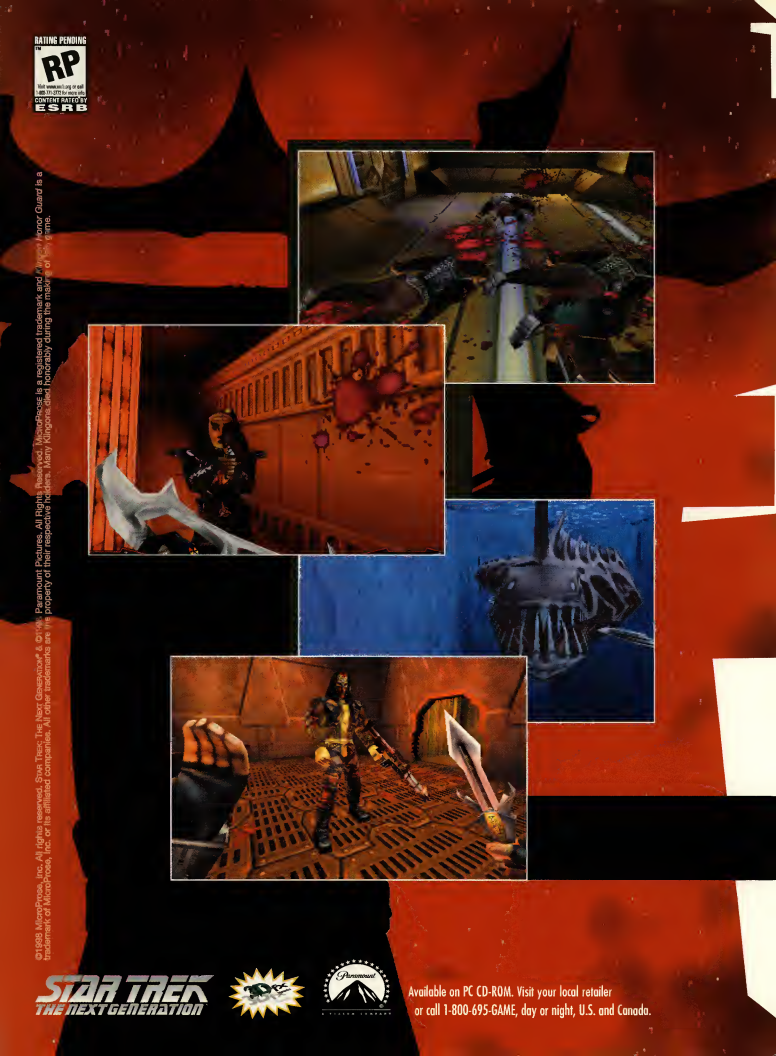
DESIGN
Written by storytellers, with care, and pulled off by experts of pacing.

RATING 10

Pluses
- Awesome scripted events
- Xen alone is worth the price of admission
- I cared what happened

Minuses
- Those loading times
- No more than 20 hours worth
- It ended


BLOODSHED
RUTHLESS
REVENGE
DEATH
BEFORE
DISHONOR



©1998 MicroProse, Inc. All rights reserved. Star Trek: The Next Generation® & ©1998 Paramount Pictures. All Rights Reserved. MicroProse is a registered trademark and Klingon Honor Guard is a trademark of MicroProse, Inc. or its affiliated companies. All other trademarks are the property of their respective holders. Many Klingons died honorably during the making of this game.

STAR TREK
THE NEXT GENERATION

Available on PC CD-ROM. Visit your local retailer
or call 1-800-695-GAME, day or night, U.S. and Canada.

ENJOY SOME KLINGON FAMILY VALUES.



In a **bloody** world of distrust and violence, only the most **brutal** will survive. So sharpen your **Bat'leth** and prepare to defend your honor in the heart of the Klingon empire – presented in awesome *Unreal*™ **3-D action.** Shred vicious **Nausicans, Andorians** and even other **Klingons.** Overpower intelligent enemies who adapt to your assaults, including fiendish **TarChops** and **Ro'peDs.** Take on **Deathmatch** and multiplayer challenges created by the Internet's top level designers.

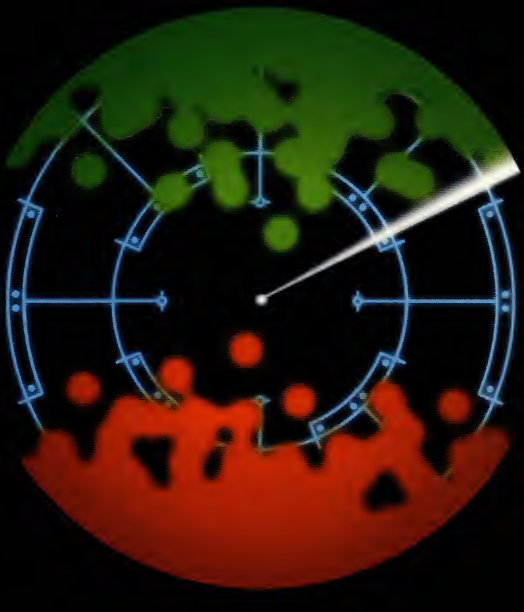
It's the ultimate test for the ultimate warrior.

KLINGON HONOR GUARD™

"IT'S A GOOD DAY TO DIE"

MICROPROSE®
www.microprose.com

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 50



ALIENS VERSUS PREDATOR

LOCK AND LOAD THIS SPRING.

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 57

Windows® CD-ROM
www.foxinteractive.com

ALIENS™ & © 1992 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. PREDATOR™ & © 1988 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. ALIENS VS. PREDATOR™ & © 1998 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All Rights Reserved. "Aliens," "Predator," and "Fox" are registered trademarks of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

FOX INTERACTIVE

RATING PENDING RP

50 Perfect Gifts

THIS IS WHAT YOU WANT, WHAT YOU REALLY, REALLY WANT!



Not included, but welcomed as gifts are: cash, lots of cash, and a big wad of fing cash

50 Perfect Gifts

There is only one time of the year when you can mercilessly drain distant relatives, friends, and family of available funds to support your addictions. Asking for heroin, Starbucks gift certificates, or a subscription to *Big 'Uns* isn't likely to get you very far, so our suggestion is to ask for computer goods. The key to milking the most out of this holiday season is to first realize what you need, then make a plan for how to get it. Just asking Mom and Dad for computer games is as idiotic as asking them for clothes. They are certain to get you all the wrong games (parents take classes in how to make the wrong decisions). Given the opportunity, gift buyers will always select the lowest-priced items they can find, and since you don't want to be playing your games on a Virge card, you need to be specific. Give exact names and brands of the games and peripherals you want, and instructions on where to get them, how to get there, and what kind of wrapping paper you'd like. This way they won't screw it up. This is especially true when asking for hardware.

We've prepared an idiot-proof gift guide that you can fill out and give to gift buyers to make sure they do you right. Sure the holidays are a time for giving, but we all know the real joy is in receiving. Special note to our families and friends: the things on the left we get for free, which is why we've included the gifts on the right.



Rainbow Six

WHY: It is one of the best games of the year. The addictive gameplay, realistic graphics, and great multiplayer experience make it a title everyone will enjoy

WHO'S BUYING: Uncle Roger, who was honorably discharged from the army (enjoyed "covert operations" with a ranking officer)

WEBSITE: www.redstorm.com

WHERE: Anywhere they sell games

HOW MUCH: $49



The Real Rainbow Six

WHY: Because shooting real guns is cool as long as no one is shooting back at you

WHO'S BUYING: Your brother Todd, who is trying to train you for future service in the Michigan Militia

WEBSITE: www.factory6.com

WHERE: Call 206-780-6640 for details

HOW MUCH: ~3,000 for a weekend of shooting M-16s, playing war games, and generally being manly



Half-Life

WHY: *Half-Life* is one of the best games ever made. And just wait until Team Fortress multiplayer comes out. Hoo-ah!

WHO'S BUYING: Your Aunt Marge, who usually finds a way to spend $50 on the most hideous clothing known to man

WEBSITE: www.sierra.com

WHERE: Anywhere they sell games

HOW MUCH: $59



Full-Life

WHY: Games are great, but nights are better spent having drinks and other things not involving multitexturing

WHO'S BUYING: Any real friend

WEBSITE: You are getting a life, which means getting away from the computer, and there is no web address for that. Try a real address

WHERE: Try a dance club (sexy dancing women), a concert (stoned dancing women), or a classy bar at happy hour (professional dancing women)

HOW MUCH: Priceless



12MB Diamond Monster 3DII

WHY: No matter what anyone tells you, this is THE card for gaming

WHO'S BUYING: Live-in girlfriend whom you convince the card will make a big difference in your career

WEBSITE: www.3dfx.com

WHERE: A store, you twit

HOW MUCH: $199 (ish)



12MB 3D Blaster Voodoo 2

WHY: Because it is a Voodoo 2 card. The drivers aren't as good as those in the Diamond or Canopus cards, but at this price it is hard to resist

WHO'S BUYING: Your low-on-cash, kind-of-cheap, live-in girlfriend who believes your constant lies

WEBSITE: www.soundblaster.com

WHERE: Any place where hardware and peripherals are sold

HOW MUCH: $99.99 after the $50 mail-in rebate. And prices are still dropping



Obsidian 2 X-24

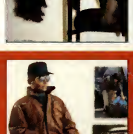
WHY: Two Voodoo 2s in one PCI slot, 24MB of texture memory, and they are even faster than two separate boards in SLI mode. The ultimate setup

WHO'S BUYING: Parents whom you manage to convince this is vital for that important career move

WEBSITE: www.quantum3d.com

WHERE: Hardware/peripheral stores

HOW MUCH: $499



Real Doll

WHY: All the benefits of a real girlfriend and she never gets a headache, is willing to experiment, doesn't eat, and best of all doesn't talk

WHO'S BUYING: Your perverted, well-to-do cousin Jerry, who swears that his life is much better since he met (purchased) Leah

WEBSITE: www.realdoll.com

WHERE: Any place they sell pervert things

HOW MUCH: $4,999 for regular model and $5,299 for deluxe (mmm ... deluxe)



Soundblaster AWE64 Gold

WHY: Not the fanciest, but it is the standard for all games

WHO'S BUYING: Santa (he is real, ya know)

WEBSITE: www.soundblaster.com

WHERE: In cluttered aisle at retail outlets. Be sure to give the exact name or you'll end up with one of a hundred useless clones

HOW MUCH: $130



Safe-T-Man

WHY: Not nearly as functional as the Real Doll mentioned above, but using him for carpool lanes and to pick up girls in pairs is quite fun

WHO'S BUYING: Your paranoid mom who thinks some madman is going to chase you down and kill you because you live alone

WEBSITE: www.skymall.com

WHERE: In any airplane catalog full of frivolous gifts we all want

HOW MUCH: $109



NEC MultiSync LCD400

WHY: Because it looks damn cool on your desk, reduces glare, and it's pretty

WHO'S BUYING: Your rich, midlife-crisis-driven Dad who wants to use your pad for lunchtime interludes with teenage secretary

WEBSITE: www.nec.com

WHERE: Electronics and computer stores

HOW MUCH: $2,700



50-inch Sony Trinitron LCD Display Monitor

WHY: Because it is the ultimate toy. Fifty-inch widescreen TV with subwoofer and stereo speakers, and it takes up about as much room as the "dogs playing poker on velvet" atrocity currently hanging in the living room

WHO'S BUYING: Any member of Congress you are currently blackmailing

WEBSITE: www.sony.com

WHERE: Electronics stores with really big showrooms

HOW MUCH: $6,599



Sin

WHY: It's *Quake II* in real-world environs with some big-ass weapons, a sniper rifle, and fast gameplay. Need we say more?
WHO'S BUYING: Your devilish friend Damien
WEBSITE: www.activision.com
WHERE: It is a game, so may we suggest going to a store that sells games?
HOW MUCH: $49



Trip to Sin City

WHY: A weekend in Vegas can and should include loose women, loose slots, washed-up lounge singers, and all-night partying
WHO'S BUYING: Your rich, extravagant (read: did too many drugs in the '70s) Auntie Mame
WEBSITE: www.vegas.com
WHERE: Call 800-823-9956 for hotel reservations
HOW MUCH: $349 for two nights at the beautiful Luxor (escorts not included, but figure an extra $250 an hour for those — so we've heard)



Pacific Bell (or your local telco) DSL Connection

WHY: It's faster than ISDN, and playing games over a 56.6 modem sucks
WHO'S BUYING: Roommates who won't even realize what they are paying for when you split up the bills
WEBSITE: www.pacbell.com
WHERE: Only where available
HOW MUCH: $59 a month for 128Kbps



Via TV Set-Top Video Phone

WHY: Turns your TV and telephone into a videophone, adding extra value to all 1-900 calls
WHO'S BUYING: The girl you've been long-distance calling for the past two years (Note, remember to cover the videophone when you have female visitors. This would result in one ugly phone call)
WEBSITE: www.holiday.com
WHERE: Several different types can be found at electronic stores
HOW MUCH: $499



Gateway Destination

WHY: Why the hell not? Nice and big 36-inch monitor, theater sound system, 400MHz, Voodoo 2. We've got one, and it kicks ass
WHO'S BUYING: The 50-something millionaire-ess keeping you as her bitch by buying you big presents like these
WEBSITE: www.gateway2000.com
WHERE: Call 800-GATEWAY
HOW MUCH: $4,200 (approximately)



Entertainment Center

WHY: I'll need some suitably cool, guylike furniture to serve as a pedestal to my new altar of entertainment goodness
WHO'S BUYING: The millionaire-ess' daughter whom you really love
WEBSITE: www.spiegel.com
WHERE: Catalogs or any furniture store located near an abandoned mall (right next to the arcade)
HOW MUCH: $399 at most



Trespasser

WHY: Incredibly detailed physics model, beautiful graphics, deep one-player game, and you get to shoot plenty of dinosaurs
WHO'S BUYING: Your little brother Johnny, who can get the money from the rents
WEBSITE: www.trespasser.com
WHERE: Wherever games are sold
HOW MUCH: $49



Multiplayer Trespasser

WHY: Because they evidently forgot about the multiplayer mode, and no first-person shooter should be without it, especially a good one like *Trespasser*
WHO'S BUYING: DreamWorks
WEBSITE: www.trespasser.com/contact
WHERE: In our dreams
HOW MUCH: Gonna take a lot of people screaming and yelling before they release a multiplayer version



Falcon Mach V

WHY: PII 450MHz, 128MB RAM, 9.1 GB SCSI hard drive, STB Velocity v4400 TNT board, single-slot Obsidian 2x-24 Voodoo 2 card ... you get the picture. Add a sound system that makes a touring metal band jealous and you realize this is officially — the shit
WHO'S BUYING: The last lottery winner
WEBSITE: www.falcon-nw.com
WHERE: Call 800-258-6778 to order
HOW MUCH: Around $5,000 (special orders)



Heather Graham

WHY: Uh, cuz she is Heather Graham and computers aren't everything
WHO'S BUYING: Uncle Vinny, the mob boss who owes you a favor
WEBSITE: www.heathergraham.com
WHERE: On Ed Burns' sissy arm at some fancy schmancy premiere in Hollywood
HOW MUCH: A lifetime of service to the mob, for starters



MechCommander

WHY: It is one of the best realtime strategy games this year
WHO'S BUYING: Your freaky friend Indigo, who is always trying to get you into TransFormers. Because "they are more than meets the eye, man"
WEBSITE: www.mechcommander.com
WHERE: Anywhere games are sold and geeks congregate
HOW MUCH: $49



Child

WHY: Once you get used to ordering around troops, you'll start to wish you could do so in real life as well. The easiest and cheapest way is to have a child
WHO'S BUYING: The girl you dumped a year ago because she told you, "My biological clock is ticking"
HOW: Do we have to tell you everything?
WHERE: In the backseat of a beaten-up Velare is kinda cool if she'll go for it
HOW MUCH: A lifetime of debt and pain

HEAD TO HEAD: SAFE-T MAN VS. REAL DOLL

CARPOOL LANE

SAFE-T-MAN→ May fool police into not pulling you over

REAL DOLL→ If they still pull you over she could get you out of the ticket (in some states she could land you in jail for necrophilia)

HIGH SCHOOL REUNION

SAFE-T-MAN→ His studly demeanor could be vital for picking up girls

REAL DOLL→ May not get you any girls, but at least you'll have a date that is guaranteed to put out

BREAK-INS

SAFE-T-MAN→ May frighten off perspective robbers who are scared of 140-pound weaklings

REAL DOLL→ Will turn robbers into harmless peeping Toms who await her next move

OVERALL

SAFE-T-MAN→ A poor man's Real Doll. But for $100 you do get a drinking buddy

REAL DOLL→ High-quality synthetic plastic, posable parts, and fully operational anatomy (OK, not fully but the important bits) make her the supreme inanimate lover



- 28 real licensed vehicles – ultra-fast sports cars and souped up muscle cars
- 17 real world tracks
- Killer high resolution graphics mode
- 2-player split-screen racing
- Shortcuts and alternative paths
- Ass kicking soundtrack featuring Fear Factory, Gravity Kills, Junkie XL, KMFDM, and Pitchshifter
- 2-player drag strip racing
- Cop chase mode – you're the cop
- More big crazy jumps, wild cop chases, cross traffic and racing mayhem





ACCOLADE



GRAVITY KILLS pitchshifter JUNKIE XL VI RECORDS

EVERYONE E ESRB

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 13

Test Drive is a registered trademark of Accolade, Inc. Test Drive 5 ©1998 Accolade, Inc. All rights reserved, developed by Pitbull Syndicate. All other trademarks are of their respective companies and are used under license by Accolade, Inc. Windows is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation.

50 Perfect Gifts



Descent: FreeSpace

WHY: The best space combat game anywhere (including the ones with a certain license attached)
WHO'S BUYING: Your grandma — she might as well use her Social Security check for something useful
WEBSITE: www.interplay.com
WHERE: Game stores everywhere; by the holidays, it may even be in the bargain bin
HOW MUCH: $39



Handicapped Parking Sticker

WHY: Because they are the only "free spaces" available on this continent
WHO'S BUYING: Again, Grandma is the best choice. She has the sticker, and god knows she shouldn't be driving
HOW: Just peel the sticker right off that Caddy
WHERE: Anywhere in Florida
HOW MUCH: Eternal damnation is rumored, but we believe it could be worth it



NHL 99

WHY: Simple — the best damn sports game ever made
WHO'S BUYING: Your toothless uncle Al
WEBSITE: www.easports.com
WHERE: Game stores the world over
HOW MUCH: $49



New Teeth

WHY: Because you lost all of yours fighting some goon in the IHL who sported one of the nastiest mullets known to man
WHO'S BUYING: Your trailer-trash -ish friend, who kinda likes the way you look without teeth but is still willing to cut back on Wal-Mart visits to help pay for them
WEBSITE: www.dentists.com
WHERE: Dentist offices and Halloween superstores
HOW MUCH: Fangs, $1.50¢ capping your front teeth, about $5,000 a tooth



SideWinder Gamepad

WHY: Gamepads are essential for sports games and adventure games like *Tomb Raider*
WHO'S BUYING: Your idiotic friend Jake who thinks *MK4* "rulez"
WEBSITE: www.microsoft.com
WHERE: Electronics and game stores — the kind that often employ pimply faced clerks
HOW MUCH: $39



NHL 99

WHY: The best damn sports game ever made. And the perfect game to test out that brand new SideWinder
WHO'S BUYING: Your toothless uncle Al, who by the way is still playing defensemen for the IHL Michigan Wings
WEBSITE: www.easports.com
WHERE: It is a computer game, so looking at Play It Again Sports is pretty useless. Unless of course you need some new/old golf cleats
HOW MUCH: $49



NCAA Football 99

WHY: The best football game available may not have a pro license, but features like the Dynasty mode and great gameplay keep you coming back
WHO'S BUYING: Your sister Sleighzee, who is currently sleeping with the offensive line at college
WEBSITE: www.easports.com
WHERE: Wherever games are sold
HOW MUCH: $49



Rose Bowl Tickets

WHY: The granddaddy of all college football Bowl games, although Anaheim is a bit boring on New Year's Eve
WHO'S BUYING: Uncle Fred, who has been running a ticket "business" ever since he got out of the big house
WEBSITE: www.rosebowl.com
WHERE: Newspaper classifieds
HOW MUCH: About $500 a ticket near game day if the teams are any good. Buy early or buy a package to save mucho moola



Need For Speed III

WHY: The best-looking and -playing racing game not in the arcades
WHO'S BUYING: Your best friend and law enforcement officer Shawn, who could finally chase you down like the scum you are
WEBSITE: www.ea.com
WHERE: Stores where they sell games, both good and bad, so be sure to leave strict guidelines for clueless buyers
HOW MUCH: $49



Radar Detector

WHY: Because speeding tickets suck, but so does going the speed limit — enter solution
WHO'S BUYING: Your insurance agent/friend, who wants to keep your rates down
WEBSITE: www.reliable-hot.com
WHERE: Electronics stores in Kentucky
HOW MUCH: $49-$300



Shogo: Mobile Armor Division

WHY: The most devastating weapon effects ever in a first-person shooter. Throw in variety and mass destruction and it's a winner
WHO'S BUYING: Your buddy Jason Hall, the CEO of Hasselbh
WEBSITE: www.monolith.com
WHERE: A store with games and such
HOW MUCH: $49



Random Anime Hottie

WHY: Because they have superpowers that let them rip off their clothes. Oh, and they have really, really big eyes
WHO'S BUYING: Dan — you know, that guy who works at the comic book store who likes you, likes you
WEBSITE: www.animec.com
WHERE: Japantowns, comic book stores, or the backs of videogame magazines
HOW MUCH: Pictures are pretty cheap, but bringing one to life could be pricey



Quake II

WHY: It's *Quake II*. To any real hardcore gamer, it is as vital as breathing
WHO'S BUYING: Your overly religious Aunt Betty, who won't have any idea what she is buying
WEBSITE: www.idsoftware.com
WHERE: Game stores, and maybe sometime soon it will drop in price
HOW MUCH: $45



Subscriptions to Playboy and PC Accelerator

WHY: Just as vital to any hardcore gamer with a sense of humor and the ability to enjoy high-res photography
WHO'S BUYING: Cousin Phil, who actually has a shrine built in his basement to the women of *Playboy*
WEBSITE: pcxl.1gn.com and www.playboy.com
WHERE: Newsstands the world over
HOW MUCH: Total of $50 for a year of pleasure and a free video of playmates doing fun things with hoses



Carmageddon II

WHY: There is no better way to get out some road rage and have a good maniacal laugh
WHO'S BUYING: That friend of your dad, Mr. Lieberman
WEBSITE: www.interplay.com
WHERE: Game stores everywhere (except for around the Bible Belt, where the game will surely be banned)
HOW MUCH: $49



Truck Driver School

WHY: For an exciting career in the transportation/flannel/large belt buckle industry
WHO'S BUYING: Uncle Billy Bob
WEBSITE: www.truckschool.com
WHERE: Commercials that air during "Jerry Springer" and really bad sporting events
HOW MUCH: Can you put a price on a career? Money shouldn't be an object. Besides, you get a brand-new flannel shirt and belt buckle with graduation



Riva TNT

WHY: Despite no Glide support, the TNT performs better than any 2D/3D board
WHO'S BUYING: Pool together the checks from relatives you haven't talked to in years
WEBSITE: www.riva.com
WHERE: All gaming stores carry about three different TNT boards, which are all virtually the same (Canopus is the best, but pricey)
HOW MUCH: $179



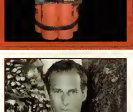
Real Dynamite

WHY: Because it is the perfect tool for bank robbing, which is what you'll need to do to afford everything on this list
WHO'S BUYING: Crazy Uncle Cooter, who still lives in moonshine somewhere down South
WEBSITE: www.ibne.org
WHERE: Gonna have to find this one on the streets
HOW MUCH: Pricey unless you have a commercial license to kill... err ... blow up stuff



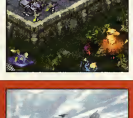
StarCraft

WHY: Everybody else bought it, why haven't you? It is absolutely the best realtime strategy game ever
WHO'S BUYING: One of your extremely geeky friends who bought three versions of the game to collect all the boxes
WEBSITE: www.blizzard.com
WHERE: Any retail gaming store in the free world (OK, the U.S. and Canada at least)
HOW MUCH: $45



Tickets to the Michael Bolton Concert in Harlem During Cinco De Mayo

WHY: It could give a similar racially tense situation
WHO'S BUYING: Only an enemy would bother
WEBSITE: www.gotohell.com
WHERE: If this concert happened, we're guessing there would be plenty of tickets available at the door
HOW MUCH: $39 (Can you believe people pay that price to see Michael Bolton? Freaky!)



Battlezone/Uprising

WHY: Because these are both damn good games that nobody bought
WHO'S BUYING: Destitute brother Jim, who buys gifts by trading in NES carts
WEBSITE: www.activision.com and www.3do.com
WHERE: In the bargain rack at any electronics store
HOW MUCH: Around $29 or less in most stores



A Subscription to PC Accelerator

WHY: So you recognize a truly good game when it is released and quit wasting money on overhyped crap
WHO'S BUYING: Anyone who is good and decent
WEBSITE: pcaccel.com
WHERE: Any newsstand proud (and/or brave) enough to carry the fine publication
HOW MUCH: $20 for a year (damn, that's a good price)



3M Precision Mousepad

WHY: Special surface for smoother rolling and accuracy. With one you could easily beat Thresh. He is all pad and no game
WHO'S BUYING: Homeless sister Kate, who uses food stamps for cash
WEBSITE: www.3m.com
WHERE: High-end computer stores
HOW MUCH: $11.11



Hot Dog and Bun Toaster

WHY: Because it toasts your buns and cooks your dogs, simultaneously. If it melted the cheese, this would be a better gift than a new car
WHO'S BUYING: Roommate Dan, who keeps complaining about the nuclear dogs you cook in the microwave
WEBSITE: www.skymall.com
WHERE: Airplane catalogs on nearly every flight. You know you've been eyeing that puppy
HOW MUCH: $49.95



Unreal

WHY: The best-looking PC game anywhere, it really showcases a powerful PC. Multiplayer still sucks, but they are working on that patch ...
WHO'S BUYING: Buy it for yourself. After all, everyone needs to feel the joy of giving
WEBSITE: www.gtinteractive.com
WHERE: On the best seller shelves of most computer software stores
HOW MUCH: $49



Pamela Anderson Lee

WHY: Think of the holidays you'd have with Pam
WHO'S BUYING: Tommy Lee may be willing to trade for a decent song or a file cake
WEBSITE: www.pamelaandersonlee.com
WHERE: Apparently she can be found in online sex chat rooms, but be careful — it could also be Tommy's celibmate Bubba lookin' for love
HOW MUCH: Breasts, $5,000 (Dr. Fisher, Beverly Hills); Lips, $1,000-$2,000 (Dr. Fisher, Beverly Hills); Personality, uh ... free

DO NOT GET ME THE FOLLOWING

No matter how tempting a sale, free giveaway, or package is, you must instruct gift buyers to get these only for people they dislike — a lot.

DOMINION: STORM OVER GIFT 3
Ion Storm finally got out a game and it blows. Don't do the same with your money.

DEER "ANYTHING"
There has never been a good game made that had "deer" in the title. None of these is based on the movie *Deer Hunter* starring Robert DeNiro and Christopher Walken

REDNECK "ANYTHING"
Even if you are a redneck, don't buy games with that word in the title. Trust us on this one

"ANYTHING" HUNTER
Unless *Hunter Hunter* (see page 48) actually makes it to store shelves, stay away

REBELLION
Our final kick at *Rebellion*. Yes it is *Star Wars*, and yes it does suck that bad

ANYTHING WITH A DVD LOGO
DVD=FMV=god awful. The only exception is a DVD title at the local porn store. Those you should buy

"ANYTHING" TITANIC
They aren't about the movie, don't star Leo, and offer nothing of interest

RIVEN
You've probably got two copies already. Do us a favor and return some, already



www.lucasarts.com/products/rogue www.starwars.com © Lucasfilm Ltd. & TM. All rights reserved. Used under authorization.

YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO LEAD THE ROGUE SQUADRON IN COMBAT AGAINST THE EMPIRE.

HERE'S YOUR DRAFT CARD.



STAR WARS ROGUE SQUADRON 3D

Your draft card? A 3D accelerator card, of course. It's the mandatory hardware necessary for you to enlist in a brand new, rapid-fire *Star Wars* air combat experience - **Rogue Squadron 3D.** Immerse yourself in the role of Luke Skywalker, leader of the Rebel Alliance's elite air corps, as you pilot a broad range of well-armed starfighters. From X-wings, Y-wings and A-wings to snowspeeders, you'll be able to unleash Rebel weaponry on the evil Empire in over 15 missions (day and night) - each spanning the vast *Star Wars* universe. Blast AT-ATs, TIE fighters, Imperial shuttles and more. Strap in, young Skywalker. It's the fight (and flight) of your life.



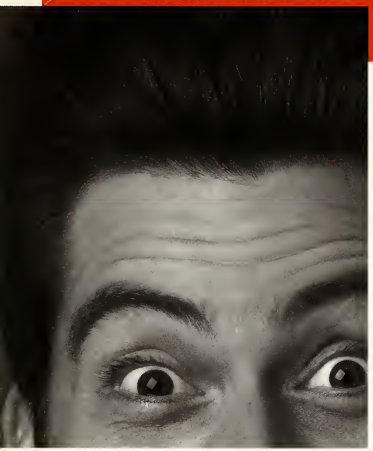




REQUIRES 3D ACCELERATOR

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 72

Gaming so fast, you won't know what annihilated you.



AT&T WorldNet® Service

Now AT&T WorldNet® Service brings you GameHub℠ on a blazing T45 connection — at speeds you've never felt before — for only $4.95 a month.

GameHub, AT&T WorldNet Service's new Gaming site, has today's hottest games — like **Unreal, Forsaken, Total Annihilation** and all the rest — at speeds that will blow you away.* And there's no faster way to the Internet, 24 hours a day, than AT&T WorldNet Service.** With Excite Online,™ powered by AT&T WorldNet Service, you'll also get news, sports and links delivered right to your screen when you log on. The good news? AT&T WorldNet Service is only $14.95 a month†. And for only $4.95 more, you get the amazing GameHub. So call today or download the AT&T WorldNet Service software. And remember, don't shoot 'til you see the greens of their eyes.

GameHub for $4.95 a month. (AT&T WorldNet Service additional)

Download free software right now at: www.att.net/wns/pc or call

1 800 883-0228

Your Internet is ready.

GameHub is a service mark of MPGNet.

*Your speed may vary depending upon personal configuration. **Based on September 1998 tests of call connect success rates and time to log in of 13 major ISPs and online service providers as tested by Inverse Network Technology. †Standard Plan includes 150 hours of Internet access at $5.00/month less than the then-current AT&T WorldNet Service Standard Price Plan (currently $19.95) for 12 months for AT&T Residential Long Distance customers, or 6 months for non-AT&T Long Distance customers ($.99 each additional hour). Telephone access and other charges and taxes may apply. Other terms and conditions apply. ©1998 AT&T. All Rights Reserved.

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 73

Metabyte Wicked3D Vengeance

Metabyte is back with a vengeance

PRICE→	$129 SRP
CHIPSET→	Voodoo Banshee
RAM→	16MB
API SUPPORT→	Direct3D, Glide, OpenGL
BUNDLE→	None

Who are these Metabyte people, anyway? You probably didn't hear about the company when it first hit the 3D accelerator scene just over a year ago with the unfortunate Virge-based Gia 3D. That card was quickly forgotten, but Metabyte shook itself off and, thankfully, made an alliance with 3Dfx.

The Vengeance card is the second happy result of that alliance (the first being the Wicked3D Voodoo 2). This new chip is based on 3Dfx's Voodoo Banshee chipset, a 2D/3D solution which, unlike the troubled Voodoo Rush, was designed entirely in-house at 3Dfx.

A card like the Vengeance is a dream come true for many gamers who just can't shell out for the price of a separate Voodoo 2 card. While the Vengeance doesn't pull off the incredible performance of a Voodoo 2 (no Banshee ever will), it does top its 3D-only counterpart in some Direct3D tests. It falls short, however, in OpenGL-accelerated *Quake II* tests, but with DirectX 6 out and more and more games supporting that API, specific OpenGL support is becoming less of an issue.

Loaded with 16MB of SDRAM, the Wicked3D comes in AGP and PCI flavors. The Re2Flex drivers have received considerable praise from owners of the Wicked 3D Voodoo 2 and provide a similarly comprehensive package here. Visual quality is excellent, with just a hint of the bleached look of some Voodoo 2 cards. It's not quite up there with the Matrox G200, but it edges out Riva TNT-based cards in its visual clarity. The opposite goes for performance: It's just above the Matrox, but it just can't compete with the awesome power of the TNT. It also lacks the frills of its competitors: There's no sign of TV-out and no software bundle — all to keep the cost at a very reasonable level.

The positive side is that it's quite a bit cheaper than its competition. You can get your hands on this baby for right around $100 if you shop around. Another nice addition is support for Wicked vision glasses (see sidebar). If you're in absolute need of a 3Dfx solution and you're short on cash, the Vengeance performs as well as a Banshee can.



Hey look, it's a picture of a 3D card and a box — wait a minute, how'd this half-naked supermodel get in there?

BANG FOR THE BUCK

The best thing about the Vengeance is its price tag, which gives important marketplace credibility, despite what seem like relatively low benchmark scores in comparison with a TNT-based board. The test machine: A PII 300 running on a 100MHz 440BX motherboard with 64MB 10ns SDRAM running Win98 DSR2.1 with DirectX 6.0.

METABYTE WICKED 3D VENGEANCE →

	800 x 600 x 16	1024 x 768 x 16
Forsaken	107.27	65.9
Incoming	45.8	34.5
Turok	70.3	N/A
Quake II	31.5	19.2

All numbers represent frames per second.

BANSHEE vs. BANSHEE!

You may think 3Dfx unearthed the first Banshee, but think again! Banshees have been around ever since the Irish inverted superstitions. 3Dfx's Banshee isn't even the first American product to use the name of the mythical apparition, either. The first Banshee was also known as Sean Cassidy, and appears in various Marvel Comics' mutant-oriented publications. And now, at long last, the Banshees go head to head!

MARVEL'S BANSHEE	3DFX BANSHEE
Once dressed in green and yellow tights with black tams	Comes in form of a green circuit board with yellow writing and black chips
Born in Ireland	Born in California
Flies using sonic waves	Screams using a powerful processor
Is a mutant	Is nonorganic
Can fly great distances using sonic powers	Can fly pretty far if you throw it hard enough
Fans feel he's underexposed	Everyone feels it's overhyped

WICKEDVISION



One of the best advantages in buying a Wicked 3D card is its compatibility with WickedVision eyewear. These stereoscopic glasses enable you to play games like *Quake* and *Unreal* in real 3D. Other display systems have tried and failed to offer players a similar experience, but none of these systems are as elegant or well designed as the light, wireless WickedVision glasses.

Currently the system supports more than 100 games including Direct3D, Quake GL, and Glide titles. Here are some of the games that best use the eyewear:

- → QUAKE II
- → UNREAL
- → SHOGO
- → INCOMING
- → G-POLICE

The WickedVision eyewear sells for a suggested retail price of $129 and can be purchased at www.wicked3d.com. The eyewear also comes in a bundle with the Wicked 3D Vengeance card for $249.

RATING 7

Pluses

- → Single slot
- → Almost Voodoo 2-class
- → Great price

Minuses

- → Can't compete with TNT in performance
- → No multitexturing

What do I buy?

Baffled by the overpopulated 3D accelerator market? Here's a straightforward way to figure out what's best for you

So you decided it's time to do it right. You heaved out your old Packard Bell, bought a clone box, a BX motherboard, and a Pentium II 450. You nabbed an A3D card, a 56K modem (or, better yet, a cable or ADSL modem), and a wompin' 19-inch monitor. Then you realized that your AGP slot is still empty.

Or maybe not. Maybe you've just had enough of playing games in software-rendering mode, and scraped together enough money to buy a modest 3D accelerator by selling your little brother's Iron lung to a pawn shop.

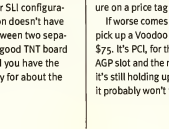
In any case, it's time to choose a 3D card. Where do you turn? Why, right here, of course!

The video accelerator muscle you pack into your PC should depend entirely on how much cash you have to spend on it. While extra bucks will get you faster games, the market has recently become a lot friendlier toward frugal folk who live on a budget.

If, as you read this, you're wincing in jealous agony, don't despair. Although we can't condone this kind of behavior, plenty of fine liquor stores close to your home have yet to be robbed.

TOP OF THE LINE ⚓

For those lucky few who are already monetarily secure, you should consider a combination of an AGP Riva TNT–based card with dual SLI Voodoo 2s. The pick of the litter on both counts is Canopus products; the Spectra 2500 with two Pure3D Voodoo 2s would do nicely. This simple TNT card allows you to plug your Voodoo 2 card right into it, saving you valuable PCI and AGP slots. If you're not concerned about TV-out, you can shave off a few bucks by going for the LX versions, but you should then look into a Voodoo 2 cooler because the LX boards don't include cooling fans. The price tag: $600 to $700.



Another great idea invc
3D's Obsidian 2 X-24. This beast has two Voodoo 2 chipsets SLIed on a single board, giving the best performance on the market (it works faster than other SLI configurations since the information doesn't have to travel over the bus between two separate cards). Add this to a good TNT board like the Spectra 2500 and you have the best setup money can buy for about the same price.

MIDDLE OF THE ROAD ⚓

Of course, you may be in a more moderate financial situation. Maybe you're expecting a decent tax return, but you owe your bookie at least half of it. Your options are a bit more limited, but here's our recommendation. Since Glide (3Dfx) support is still popular among game developers, you might just grab a Voodoo 2 and let it handle all of your 3D acceleration, regardless of your 2D base card. Voodoo 2 prices are dropping all over the place, and although we think Canopus makes the best of the lot, any Voodoo 2 card will do the trick. Since you're not going with an AGP solution, snag a 12MB version. If you shop around, you can find a Diamond Monster 3D II for well under $200.

On the other hand, Direct3D and OpenGL are becoming more prominent for the standardizing developers, and few games opt for Glide-only support (although *Quake* and its sequels do, so that's possibly reason enough). Consider a TNT-based card; again, if the Canopus card isn't in your price range, another brand such as the STB Velocity 4400 or Diamond's Viper V550 will do nicely. For $150 to $200, you can make the jump to TNT.

FOR THE FINANCIALLY IMPAIRED ⚓

Finally, if you're scraping the bottom of the barrel just to get a pack of ramen noodles for the week, you really should consider the lowest-cost alternative for your 3D dollar. Be glad, there are a few cards that can do a great job at a budget price.

Banshee cards are an acceptable alternative to the more costly Voodoo 2 cards. They support Glide, and you can get one for right around $100 (options include the Vengeance, he Maxi Gamer Phoenix, nd the Quantum 3D Raven). Remember that he Banshee chipset only does 1x AGP, so you won't get the benefit of using system memory for texture storage.

The Matrox Mystique G200 is a killer card for 2x AGP bus, and it features the best image quality and 2D acceleration we've seen since the same company's Millennium II 2D-only board. Figure on a price tag of around $140.

If worse comes to worse, you can always pick up a Voodoo I card for between $50 and $75. It's PCI, for those of you lacking both an AGP slot and the money for a Voodoo 2, and it's still holding up as a viable chipset — but it probably won't for much longer. ➲

Here's rundown of the 3D accelerators mentioned in this article, by chipset, card maker, and card name.

3DFX BANSHEE



Creative Labs Graphics Blaster Banshee
www.creaf.com (SRP $129; seen as low as $105 on www.hardwarestreet.com)



Diamond Monster Fusion
www.diamondmm.com (SRP $159 AGP, $149 PCI; seen as low as $126 on www.mcglen.com)



Quantum 3D Raven
www.quantum3d.com (SRP $149; seen as low as $125 on www.applemacnet.com)



Metabyte Wicked3D Vengeance
www.metabyte.com (SRP $149)



Guillemot Maxi Gamer Phoenix
www.guillemot.com (SRP $149; seen as low as $89 on www.guillemot.com)

3DFX VOODOO 2

All Voodoo 2 prices are for 12MB boards. Don't even bother with the 8MB version.



STB Black Magic Voodoo 2
www.stb.com (SRP $299; seen as low as $139 w/$50 rebate on www.shopping.com)



Diamond Monster 3D 2 (SRP $249; seen as low as $170 on www.buycomp.com)



Creative Labs 3D Blaster Voodoo 2 (SRP $249; seen as low as $145 on www.buycomp.com)



Canopus Pure 3D II
www.canopuscorp.com (SRP $299; seen as low as $243 on www.applemacnet.com)



Guillemot Maxi Gamer 3D 2
(SRP $179; seen as low as $229 for two boards on www.guillemot.com)



Orchid Righteous 3D II
www.orchd.com (SRP $249; seen as low as $215 on www.buycomp.com)

DUAL VOODOO 2 SINGLE BOARD DESIGNS



Quantum 3D Obsidian 2 X-24
(SRP $499; seen as low as $419 on www.applemacnet.com)

3DFX VOODOO GRAPHICS



Diamond Monster 3D (SRP $99; seen as low as $71 on www.buycomp.com)

Canopus Pure 3D
(SRP $129; seen as low as $115 on www.applemacnet.com)



Orchid Righteous 3D (SRP $99; seen as low as $85 on www.techstore.com)



Guillemot Maxi Gamer 3D (SRP $99; seen as low as $69 on www.guillemot.com)

(Note: Voodoo 2 and Voodoo Graphics are 3D add-in cards. Your current 2D or 2D/3D card is still required to use them.)

NVIDIA RIVA TNT



Canopus Spectra 2500
(SRP $199; seen as low as $169 on www.hardwarestreet.com)



Diamond Viper V550 (SRP $199; seen as low as $169 on www.mcglen.com)



STB Velocity 4400 (SRP $299; seen as low as $164 on www.buycomp.com)

Creative Labs Graphics Blaster TNT (SRP $169; seen as low as $139 on www.shopping.com)

MATROX G200



Matrox Mystique G200
www.matrox.com (SRP $169; seen as low as $89 on www.buycomp.com)

SPEED KILLS.

ATI RAGE FURY. So fast, you won't know what hit you.

GRAPHICS BY ATi rage 128



ATI RAGE FURY

- True 128-bit 3D and 2D graphics engine
- Advanced 3D architecture including Superscalar Rendering which doubles rendering performance and Single-Pass Multi-texturing to render images and effects together on the fly
- A massive 32MB of memory for realistic 3D gameplay, massive textures and resolutions up to 1920x1200
- Designed for DirectX 5.0/6.0 and OpenGL with full ICD
- Experience 3D game action with true color performance at 1024x768
- Integrated hardware DVD for incredible video playback
- Features TV-out for big screen gaming
- Supports ATI-TV Wonder that turns your PC into a TV



The New Breed of Speed.

www.atitech.com/ad/pcacc

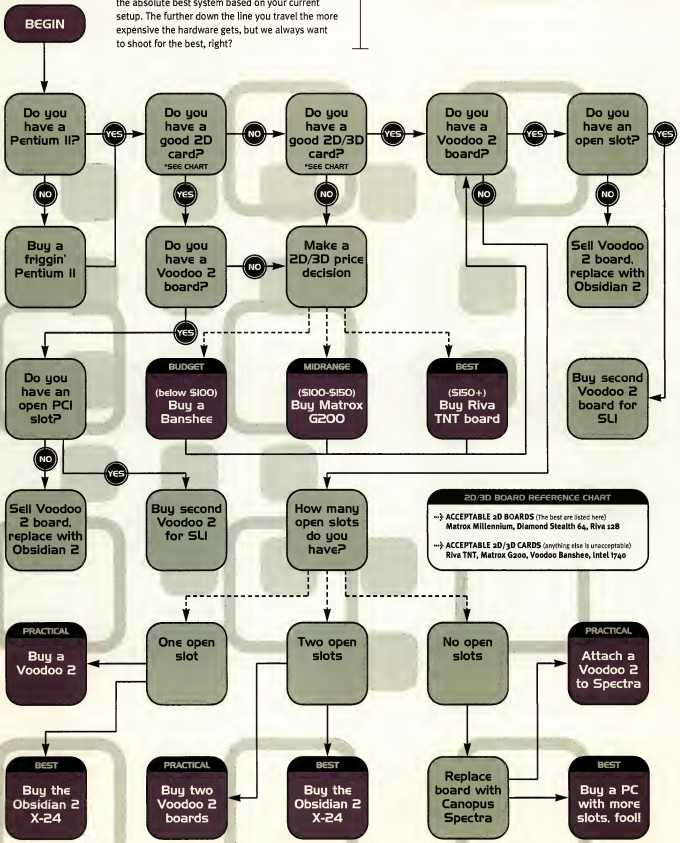
© Copyright 1998. ATI Technologies Inc. ATI, RAGE FURY and ATI-TV are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of ATI Technologies Inc. Products may not be exactly as shown.

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 19

The Ultimate

3D Accelerator Flowchart

So, you're still a little confused about what 3D accelerator card you should buy? Start at the upper left corner and go through the flowchart below. It will take you on the path you should follow to get the absolute best system based on your current setup. The further down the line you travel the more expensive the hardware gets, but we always want to shoot for the best, right?



Wow! Audio for your computer that enables your ears to track sounds the way your eyes are tracking these words. Which means now if suddenly something goes Bang, you'll know just where to look. That's because A3D™ from Aureal actually puts audio into perspective – not by dividing it between speakers – by creating real sounds that work the way your ears do. It comes in handy when you need to Zap aliens lurking behind you. In fact, game makers like LucasArts and Activision are featuring A3D in their newest titles. Experience A3D for yourself at www.A3D.com.



BELIEVE YOUR EARS™

Go to **http://www.pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 20

©1998 Aureal Semiconductor, Inc. A3D and Aureal are trademarks of Aureal Semiconductor Inc. Other trademarks are properties of their respective owners. Activision® is a registered trademark of Activision, Inc. Ritual and Sin are trademarks of Ritual Entertainment. Sin images are copyright© Ritual Entertainment. Monster Sound is a registered trademark of Monster Cable®. All trade names referenced are the service mark, trademark, or registered trademarks of their respective manufacturers.

Games you really want

SCREW POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND KILL WITHOUT CONSCIENCE

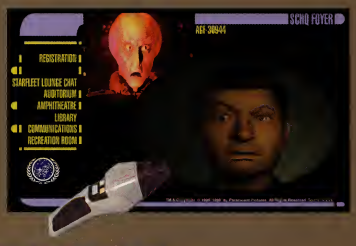
OK, we know you like games, or you wouldn't be sitting here reading this crap. You're jazzed by *Unreal*, you've spent entire months of your life immersed in the procession of *Doom*,*Duke*,*Quake* games — hell, you even dig *Spec Ops* as a concept. If it's strategic and stealthy, if things move and you can shoot 'em, you'll play it.

Deep down, though, you know there's just something missing, a certain *je ne sais quoi* (which in French means something really snotty). These games are just too tame somehow. Yeah, there's speed and dungeons and chunks of flying disemboweled meat, but there's not enough innovation. You're tired of playing the good guy all the time — you feel evil today. You want something that throws the book out the window and pushes the edge from the concept all the way down to the environments. (You think *Postal* came close, but it didn't get the gameplay quite right. *Carmageddon* is right up your alley, too, and *Dungeon Keeper* was a valiant attempt to delve into the depths of evilness.) Lately, you find yourself seven *Quake II* frags down because you've been daydreaming of the games you really wish you could play.

Well, here are 11 of those games — the ones that take concepts well past the namby-pamby of political correctness, where speed, shooting, and attitude are really all that matters. Now, we're not talking about something that's just a splatterfest — you want that, go buy the *Die Hard Trilogy*. No, these are meant to be fun in the truest sense, the kind of games where you get killed because you're laughing so hard with pure glee that you can't move. Face It: If you could have any of these, wouldn't that *Quake II* disc get tossed aside like a used Band-Aid? *(Note to game developers: Go for it. We'll be happy to talk royalties.)*

Mirror, Mirror

Tired of the do-gooder wussies who wear the uniform of the Federation? Well, this first-person blaster goes back to the one episode where life on the USS Enterprise was any fun. You've got the alternate universe blues, Spock has that crazy goatee, Sulu is a yakuza, and you are a lowly red-shirt. How the crew reacts to you depends on your choice of character: Play as a female ensign, for example, and you'll really have to worry about Kirk's phaser. To make matters worse, the lead characters are always asking you to join them on missions where they tell you to try to establish personal communications with some alien who eats ensigns for lunch. You'll have to wipe out the whole gang to escape, gleefully blasting each actor before he has the opportunity to launch a career starring in bad alternate-universe B-movies. Featuring the voices and toupees of the original characters, and approved by Paramount.



Border Control



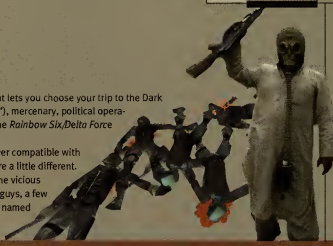
You're on the U.S.-Mexico border, and you can take your pick. Do you want to be the border guard tracking down drug mules, illegal laborers, and crazed mariachis? Or would you rather be the good-hearted Mexican trying to avoid corrupt gringo border guards in your search for a better life? Either way, anything goes in the rough country of the Texas lowlands and the highways of San Diego County: bribes, drug-running, the occasional Paul Rodriques concert, and as many inflatable rafts as you can use. Weapons for the border patrol are standard pistol and sniper rifle fare, while the Mexicans employ anything from empty bottles of Corona to Columbian-made machine guns. There are no arrests on this border. (An expansion pack to follow lets you play the special water-based Cuban scenario and the occasional Canadian cocaine run.)

The subhead used to say "Screw the Moral Majority," but we wanted something more P.C.

Bad to the Bone

They had the right idea in *Dungeon Keeper*, don't you think? Here's one that lets you choose your trip to the Dark Side: all-purpose terrorist (of course, your handle will be "Freedom Fighter"), mercenary, political operative, assassin, Microsoft executive, you name it. It's first-person action in the *Rainbow Six/Delta Force* mode — except that you've just switched sides.

Through an amazing deal with Red Storm, this game is actually multiplayer compatible with *Rainbow Six*. This time when a troop tries to rescue hostages, the results are a little different. A strategy section involves setting up the typical terrorist team, including the vicious right-hand man who stays alive until the very end and is killed by the good guys, a few guards who fall asleep when they really shouldn't, and a scary German guy named Gunther.





Trophy Piranha

It's a calm, peaceful body of water, but your hip waders won't protect you from everything in the lake. You're fishing for the biggest bass, trout, and walleye in the country, but you're just as likely to see piranha, gators, cottonmouths, and a rabid David Hasselhoff in this water. Then there are the other anglers, who are willing to do anything to get the prime spots where they're biting. Fishing with a rod in one hand and .45 magnum in the other is a little harder than you think. Catch the big fish to earn the bucks to buy TNT — then piranha and other anglers will learn to fear you. Also available: *Trophy Shark: Guess What Bit Your Leg Off?* Finally, fishing games that won't put you to sleep.

Hunter Hunter

We've had enough of those dumb-ass hunting games. In fact, we've had enough of those dumb-ass hunters, too. Now, it's open season on them. This game lets you turn the tables on the weekend warriors who drive from their suburban castles into unsuspecting small towns and shoot livestock, street signs, and the occasional Chevy Lumina. Dusting off the Build engine yet again, this unauthorized add-on pack to *Deer Hunter* should scare the shit out of more than a couple of latte-drinking sissy boys who think they can regain their manhood by killing a few harmless mammals with high-caliber rifles. Imagine their surprise when they are lining up a six-point buck with their $2,000 Winchester 30-06 and Sharper Image miniscope and they get shot in the back of the head. The stand-alone multiplayer battle has two difficulty levels: Easy has orange vests and you are drunk, Hard is all-camouflage and you are really, really drunk. Finally, a hunting game with a bit of danger.





FIFA 99: Scottish Hooligans

Does Your Car Have a Front Door?

Now you'll need all the soccer skills you've gained playing all those sports games... because IF you lose in *Hooligans*, the crowd doesn't like it one bit. Mixing soccer action with realistic players on the field and third-person fighting on the terraces, this game's weapons include seats, badly sung chants, and those salmonella haggis meals they serve outside the stadiums. One minute you're playing soccer, the next you're fighting your way out of the stadium through an enraged crowd of drunk Scotsmen who think you should've won 5-0. Even if you make it out alive, it's entirely possible that you'll get pummeled on the way home for getting in the path of a typical Saturday evening pub brawl. You have no room for error during the game; you'll duck batteries, bombs, and the occasional sheep even if you lose a goal to a bribed referee's dodgy penalty call. But win and watch the other team get slaughtered in a *Braveheart*-esque massacre. Coming soon: *Frat Hooligans NCAA 99: When Guys Named Chip Get Really Drunk*.

▶ p. 52


RETURN TO
HOMEWORLD
FASTER
ON A
FALCON


FALCON NORTHWEST
GAMING PC'S:
PLAY FASTER.
CALL:
(888) FALCON-1
(888) 325-2661
WWW.FALCON-NW.COM
CUSTOM BUILT PC'S STARTING AT $2,495 FOR GAME PLAYING, GRAPHICS, GAME DESIGN OR EVEN GETTING SOME WORK DONE.
FALCON NORTHWEST
COMPUTER SYSTEMS
relic
SIERRA
WWW.SIERRASTUDIOS.COM

p. 49



Unnatural Selection

Out to Pasture

Darwin's theory hasn't been working lately: The population has exploded, and there's no such thing as Soylent Green or even Death Race 2000. Trouble is, the political strength of the elderly has resulted in decreasing resources — all the good parking spots and choicest buildings are being devoted to their care. Now, it's up to you to save a dying world by taking the evolutionary process into your own hands. This 30-level game takes you from pastoral, old-fashioned old folks' homes to the final, immense challenge: Florida. The third-person perspective makes aiming difficult, but since the codgers aren't moving too quickly, it shouldn't be a problem. You can go subtle (steal heart medicine, cancel "Matlock," blow up the local Kentucky Fried Chicken) or brazen (destroy the Metamucil factory).

A Good Day

Based on the award-winning Ice Cube video "Today It Was a Good Day," your objective here is simple: Make it through a day in the 'hood without getting your ass capped in a drive-by. The pathways you travel aren't the safest ... especially since you left your AK at home. The successful player will have no trouble with his gold-trimmed BMW. Drop in on the homies, score some fly girls ... and then there's the cheeba. Do it well, and you won't see a cop car or chopper all day. Screw up, and the 411 is that you're on the run without any fun. Your choice: first-person pleasure, or a third-person run through the nastiest streets of South Central.



Slaughterhouse:

The Oscar Meyer Mayhem

The fresh meat is still on the hoof, and it's broken out of its pens — pigs, bulls, and chickens are running all over your multifloor factory. Can you kill enough to make your market shipment? Can you clean things up enough to make it through the FDA inspector's tour? Will the accidental slaughter of a janitor change the taste of your hot dogs? What if you kill the cows that were quarantined for suspicion of Mad Cow disease? Resource management, strategy, and a firm hand with the electric zapper all come into play in this frantic paean-to-capitalism jaunt. Think of it as *Gauntlet* with udders, or an average day at Oscar Meyer. Key to game sales is a full-on boycott from PETA.



Civil War 2000

The ultimate realtime strategy game gives you the choice of controlling the rednecks of the South, the militant militias of the Midwest, the gang-bangers of the West Coast, and the so-annoying-it-hurts East Coast sophisticates in an all-out battle for the United States. Lead the Ford Truck rush, organize a series of drive-by shootings, pipe bomb the rest of the country, or attack with light beer Molotov cocktails. Each faction has its own strengths and weaknesses. Online tournaments are held, with each part of the country allowed to play only their units. It could finally be the game that raises tensions between the geographical parts of our country enough for a real-life war. A special add-on, available only in Wal-Mart, pits everyone against the black choppers of the U.S. government.

Last Man Standing

Finally, the "license-be-damned" game we all want. All your heroes — Duke, the *Doom* guy, Kyle Katarn, Lara Croft, those stupid *Redneck Rampage* guys, even Gabriel Knight for Chrissake — show up in one big deathmatch, with levels drawn from all their greatest hits. Every weapon is there, but you can only pick up the ones from your own game! Can your BFG beat the *Quake* dude's rail gun? Will you be able to fire off the rocket launcher before having it yanked by a Force Pull? Will a *Hexen II* spell affect a *Blood* zombie? And what the hell is Gabriel Knight going to shoot with, anyway? A planned add-on will allow you to take control of the real bad guys from sports games so you will know who is more ugly and deadly, Chris Spielman of the Buffalo Bills, Ulf Samuelsson of the New York Rangers, or Lu Wang of *Shadow Warrior*.

Going Too Far

Some of the previously mentioned games are a bit sick or politically incorrect, but the following list is for real sickos. We don't really encourage the development of any of these games, but thought you might find the premises interesting and quite disturbing.



The Parent Trap

This game won't feature the overused Disney license, but instead lets you play cooperatively in first-person perspective as Eric or Lyle Menendez, and take out your parents through 13 scenarios. The advanced "parent" AI randomly reminds you to clean your room and cut your damn hair. The advanced "crazy, money-hungry son" AI reminds you that you actually wear a wig, and gives you hints on how to off your rich folks via a Satanic voice (allegedly, what you get when Motley Crüe CD is played on a vinyl record player).



Scoring With Pamela and Tommy

If South Peak is going to continue torturing us with FMV-based games, then we have a proposal. Since the only good FMV is porn, how about a game that takes the controversial sex tapes of Pamela and Tommy Lee through a new "Real Video" technology that allows you to fully interact with the environments? You'd be the rookie who has to use all of his guile to score with Pam, but make a wrong move and Tommy will make sure you can't sit down for a week.

Schoolyard Slaughter

Think of it as an economic battleground as you set up shop as an underage drug dealer in one of America's decaying inner-city public schools. Dodge touchy-feely new-age counselors and pot-bellied security guards as you establish yourself as the top drug dealer in the school district. Laugh as politicians, celebrities, and sports heroes tell your young customers not to do drugs, then spend a summer at the Betty Ford clinic recovering from "pain killers." Special points are awarded for hooking the youngest kids, and for turning the girl's gym teacher into a crack-whore. Remember, we are not encouraging development of these sick, sick games, we are merely pointing out exactly how sick they are. *[Man, we're all going to get fired, aren't we?]*



Bill Bixby's Operation



Remember the classic kids' game where you tried to remove plastic pieces from a cartoon body without making the buzzing noise? Well, this new update based on Bill Bixby's prostate operation is a tunnel game of sorts, where players explore dark, terrifying worlds to remove a nasty bit of cancer.



Escape From Phil Hartman's Wife

You... one home video... a hard day of visual gags to find your wife drugged up and armed — the chase is on. Use witty comments, celebrity impersonations, and run like hell. The entire city of Burbank is rendered in detail, but even on the easiest levels you aren't likely to make it out of the house alive. Survive and you can team up with David Spade in a series of low-budget, low-laugh comedies, die and ... well, you're dead.

— **DON ST. JOHN** *and the entire PCXL staff spend entirely too much time alone with their thoughts.*

MAKE YOUR OWN DAMN ROAD!



POWER SLIDE™

SCREAMING-FAST DRIVE ANYWHERE 3D RACING.



Best graphics ever seen in a racing game. Period. Go from 0 to 60 FPS at the speed of thought!



Drive anywhere! Do anything! 6 degrees of limitless freedom! 8 merciless environments! 8 player multiplay!



Feel the road in your teeth with advanced physics modeling. Mud! Sand! Ice! Snow! And more!

Available at your local retail store.
Order direct at www.gtstore.com or call 1-800-610-GTIS

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PC CD ROM

NEED A HINT? 1-900-CALL-2GT

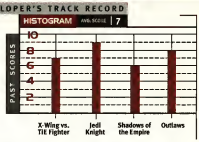
RATBAG

GT Interactive Software

www.gtgames.com

Power Slide © 1998 GT Interactive Software Corp. All rights reserved. Under license from [illegible]. [illegible] are trademarks of GT Interactive Software Corp. [illegible] are trademarks of [illegible]. [illegible] are trademarks of [illegible]. [illegible] are trademarks of [illegible]. [illegible] are trademarks of [illegible].

DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD



X-Wing: Alliance

Star Wars — game? Me like *Star Wars*!!

LucasArts should have a big sign outside its offices like McDonald's does: Millions of Happy *Star Wars* Fans Served. Anything associated with *Star Wars* has been a hyped-up money machine — especially the movies (the new one will be in theaters shortly after *Alliance* ships). *Star Wars* invented hype, man! It invented licensing too, which makes you wonder about ... never mind, I'll save the inevitable *Rebellion* bashing for later.

X-Wing: Alliance is the latest installment of developer Totally Games' take on space battle in the *Star Wars* universe. To quickly recap, first there was *X-Wing*, and it was good, then you flew for the bad guys in *TIE Fighter*. Both were very low on the sucktitude factor. Whereas the latest incarnation, *X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter*, had a multi-player focus (much to the chagrin of many fans), *Alliance* promises to get back to a strong single-player experience, without sucking. It's gonna do this by concentrating on story elements, which put you as a member of the Azzameen trader/smuggler family who must balance his commitment to the rivalry with the Viraxo family with fighting in the Rebellion. And not suck.



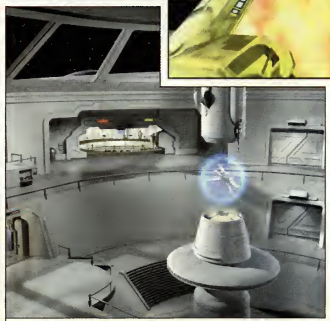
The Bad MF attempts a tricky indoor poolside landing.





The buzz around this title is mostly centered on one main thing: flying the Millennium Falcon (hereafter known as the "Bad MF" in fear of misspelling Millenium. Whoops, there I go). This is what fans have been demanding for years. And LucasArts says not only will you be able to fly the Mille — Bad MF, but you'll fly it during the coolest battle in *Star Wars* history, the battle of Endor. Yeah, you'll actually fly it into the Death Star 2 and blow it up real good. How the character will manage to finagle his way into this somewhat pivotal role is yet to be seen (bonk Lando over the head and steal the keys?); most likely it will be a parallel universe of some kind. Convenient, eh?

One of the main things introduced to the tried and true gameplay will be a dramatically increased sense of scale. LucasArts plans on having more than 100 ships in battle simultaneously in any given mission. Capital ships will be much larger, and ▶ p. 58



***Star Wars* jokes are mostly totally inane, like my captions.**

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Totally Games
PUBLISHER → LucasArts
RELEASE DATE → Q1 '99
3D SUPPORT → Direct3D

INTEREST GAUGE



THE HYPE

LucasArts is no stranger to hype, especially right before a movie gets released.

THE HURDLE

Everyone say it with me now: "*Rebellion* sucked!" (That's right, we can't get over it, OK?)

THE HIT

Flying the Bad MF is a high concept. Let's see if LucasArts can pull it off.

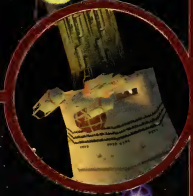
X-Wing: Alliance Gallery







The enhanced textures (higher res, more color depth) and the level of detail (check the itty-bitty pilot in the A-Wing) are examples of *Alliance*'s incremental improvements to the *XvT* engine. Full DirectX 6 support is included.



The term "Bad MF" is, of course, stolen from *Pulp Fiction* (now the lawyers can breathe easy)

A wide variety of ships will be available on missions: the usual X-, Y-, A-, and B-Wings for the Rebel missions, the Bad MF of course, and on the family missions, a Corellian transport that's kinda — but not exactly — like the Bad MF (background, top).

In *Return of the Jedi*, the producers used duct tape on Leia's breasts to avoid any flopage

FIVE QUESTIONS

TOTALLY GAMES' LARRY HOLLAND TRIED TO JEDI MIND TRICK HIS WAY OUT OF ANSWERING OUR FIVE QUESTIONS, BUT THOSE TRICKS WON'T WORK ON US. WE'RE LIKE JABBA.

Q: How is the player going to get behind the controls of the MF, especially during the Death Star battle? Won't Chewbacca have something to say about that?
A: Chewbacca will be totally in favor of you flying the MF in the attack of the second Death Star, because by that time in the storyline you have proven to be not only an incredible Starfighter pilot, but an expert in handling the Corellian transport.

Q: Will Boba Fett's Slave 1 make an appearance?
A: Boba Fett flies a highly modified Firespray Class Patrol and Attack ship. The Firespray Class spacecraft will appear in *Alliance*. Boba Fett may make a cameo appearance. We are unsure at this time.

Q: What games are you most looking forward to playing, besides your own?
A: *European Air War* and the other WWII flight sims that are on the horizon.

Q: For the record, what's the name of that strange little guy who's Lando's co-pilot?
A: Sullustan Nien Nunb.

Q: Who's the biggest *Star Wars* babe: Princess Leia, Jabba's slave girl, or Aunt Beru?
A: I'll never tell. That's my little secret.



We have no idea what this is (a futuristic Cessna?), but guess we'll find out when the playable appears.

▶ P. 55 you'll feel like you're in a full-scale war instead of just small battles. This increased scale is achievable due to the enhancements the *Alliance* team has made to the *Xv7* engine, which takes advantage of DirectX 6 features to speed up the game and gives it a facelift, particularly in the textures and special effects department. This also shows up in the fully 3D cockpits that you'll be able to look around with the mouse.

The missions will also benefit from the scale issue. Being able to hyperspace during the course of a mission should open up interesting design possibilities. You'll be able to travel pretty much at will between hyperspace buoys, which connect parts of space that are way, way distant, to fulfill your mission objectives. So you might hyperspace out of a quiet part of space only to warp into a full-scale battle.

The two branching storylines will have their own types of missions — for example, you won't be fighting the Empire on your family power-struggle missions. What's kinda cool is that in the "family missions" (sounds like a picnic gone bad) you'll be flying a Corellian transport much like the Bad MF, but not exactly. Don't get too hung up on it, because on the Rebel missions your ships will be the old alphabet soup standbys: X-, Y-, A-, and B-Wings. That side of the story involves finding plans for the second Death Star, as the game takes place in the time between the second and third movies. Also, a new experimental TIE Fighter will make an appearance. Fifty missions in all (of which you can choose the balance of pursuing family or Rebel matters) should keep you well occupied until it's time to go to multiplayer.

Multiplayer is gonna be at least as functional as its predecessor, with up to four players on Internet and up to eight on LAN. In addition, a new dynamic mission generator will allow you to customize your own missions for more variation and replayability. And to dangle that carrot in front of us again, LucasArts hints that the Bad MF will be featured in the multiplayer game, with one person flying and two people acting as gunners in the twin quad turrets. Let's face it, it can't dangle that carrot and then whip it away — well, it better not or someone's gonna come down there and dump a whole load of *Rebellions* in the LucasArts parking lot.

— ED LEE ***is wandering just what a "Phantom Menace" is.***



This game's got spaceships in it, huh?



Big-ass space stations and massive capital ships are examples of *Alliance*'s improved sense of scale.

CASTING CALL



Samuel L. Jackson's

With Samuel L. Jackson appearing in the prequel movies and all, we thought it fit to suggest a few more casting choices:

SAMUEL L. JACKSON
PLAYING--> Jedi Master Mace Mindu (this is true!)
LINE--> "Feel the Force, motherf*cker"

JOE PESCI
PLAYING--> The Jawa leader
LINE--> "What do I look like to you, a f*cking Ewok?"

CHRISTOPHER WALKEN
PLAYING--> Boba Fett
LINE--> "Don't f*ck with me, boy"

MARLON BRANDO
PLAYING--> Jabba's dad
LINE--> "Take the gun, leave the rodentlike thing"

HEATHER LOCKLEAR
PLAYING--> A saucy wench
LINE--> "That bitch Aunt Beru's got nothing on me"

WWW.PLANESCAPE-TORMENT.COM

FROM THE PEOPLE WHO BROUGHT YOU FALLOUT™ 2 AND BALDUR'S GATE™

BRIAN FARGO PRESENTS A BLACK ISLE STUDIOS PRODUCTION

THE NAMELESS ONE "PLANESCAPE: TORMENT" MORTE RICTUSGRIN SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY THE LADY OF PAIN

DIRECTED BY GUIDO HENKEL EDITED BY FEARGUS URQUHART ART DIRECTOR TIM DONLEY LEAD PROGRAMMER DAN SPITZLEY

LINE PRODUCER KENNETH LEE WRITTEN BY CHRIS AVELLONE & COLIN McCOMB PRODUCTION DESIGN BY ERIC CAMPANELLA & JAMES LIM

ART BY AARON MEYERS & CHRIS JONES PROGRAM BY ROBERT HOLLOWAY & JIM GARDNER BEST BOY GREG PETERSON

BASED ON ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, PLANESCAPE UNDER LICENSE BY TSR, INC.

COMING 1999

Interplay

BLACK ISLE STUDIOS™

Planescape Torment & Design: © 1998 Interplay Productions. All Rights Reserved. © 1998 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Planescape, the Planescape logo, Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, Torment, the AD&D logo, and the TSR logo are trademarks of TSR, Inc. and are used by Interplay under license. TSR, Inc. is a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Interplay, the Interplay logo, Black Isle Studios and the Black Isle Studios logo are trademarks of Interplay Productions. Exclusively licensed and distributed by Interplay Productions. All other trademarks and copyrights are property of their respective owners.

Go to http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411: Product Number 60



COMPLETE 2D ACCELERATION IS NOW



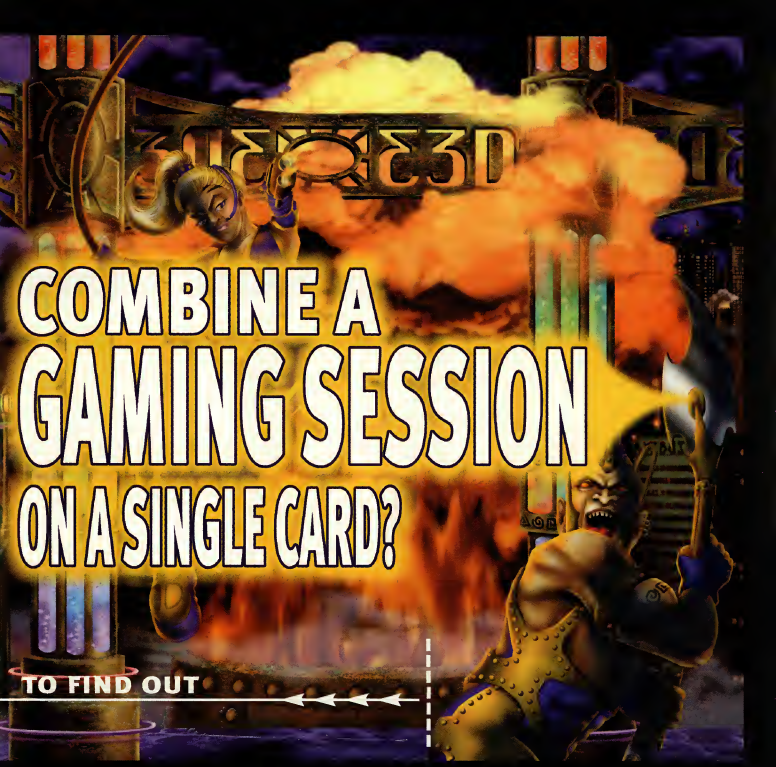
NEW! 3DFX VOODOO BANSHEE 2D/3D TECHNOLOGY

- Scorching 3D performance at 60 frames/sec
- True 128-bit 2D acceleration
- 16MB of fast SDRAM
- Awesome Glide,™ Direct3D,® and OpenGL® game support

DIAMOND
MULTIMEDIA
Accelerate your world.

Enter the Monster Fusion z100 Sweepstakes at: http://www.diamondmm.com/monsterfusion

© 1998 Diamond Multimedia Systems, Inc All rights reserved. Diamond and the Diamond logo are registered trademarks of Diamond Multimedia Systems, Inc. Monster 3D



FUSED WITH VOODOO 3D GAMING.

Windows 98

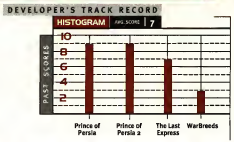
Want blistering 2D and 3D acceleration on one graphics card? Pick up Diamond's new Monster Fusion. It's the first card to fuse the blinding speed of 128-bit 2D graphics with intense Voodoo 3D gaming power. By harnessing the powerful new 3Dfx® Voodoo™ Banshee technology, Monster Fusion delivers the speed you need to survive on today's battlefields. It rips through the most extreme 2D action at resolutions up to 1920 x 1440. It delivers smoother, faster 3D images at 60 frames per second. In fact, it even tools your system for faster performance in other applications. Plus, it includes an explosive software bundle featuring the latest in 3D gaming. So nuke that slow PC. Pick up some Fusion today.



Fold These Pages!
To find out how we combined 2D graphics and 3D gaming on a single card, bring the two edges of this ad together until the dotted lines meet one another.

is a trademark of Diamond Multimedia Systems, Incorporated, 2880 Junction Avenue, San Jose, CA 95134. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 22



Prince of Persia 3D

Is the Prince's magic still there?

PC gaming has come a long way since 1986, the year Jordan Mechner's original *Prince of Persia* debuted, but the game still has a warm place in our hearts (Mechner did *Karateka*, after all). *PoP* may have been 2D, but because there was none of the peripheral Z-buffering, Gouraud shading, or bilinear filtering rigamarole, gameplay was the clear focus. *Prince of Persia* and its 1993 successor hit the action/adventure nail on the head, with a fluidly animated running, jumping, climbing hero, deadly traps, and spike-filled pits. The groundbreaking title really led the way for the range of games we now know as *Tomb Raider* and its clones.

Prince of Persia 3D, the latest incarnation of the series, brings back the Prince and will incorporate all of the 3D graphics and sound we now expect, while maintaining the perilous adventure of the earlier installments. Mechner not only is consulting on level design and the game's look and feel, but also co-wrote the storyline (the Princess has been kidnapped by the deformed son of King Assan, and the Prince was beaten and thrown in a dungeon. He must escape and endure various perils throughout exotic locales to rescue his wife).

Helping to bring the Prince into the '90s are two core technologies: Motion Factory's Motivate for smooth, realistic animation, and NDL's NetImmerse for creating real-time worlds and easy scaling across a wide range of computers. To achieve the fluid, traditional *PoP* look in 3D, Red Orb hired a nationally ranked gymnast to perform all of the Prince's moves, and videotaped the action from two angles. The clips were digitized and composited into an AVI and used as reference data for the animators.

"Now we're turning our attention to sword fighting," Executive Producer Andrew Pederson reports. "The challenge will be to carry the smooth motion in the navigation into the sword fighting so that it feels as if it is all part of one movement. So far things are looking good."

The Prince's hand-to-hand combat weapons consist of a sword (duh!), a staff, and a pair of double blades, which he'll use to fight guards as well as creatures derived from Persian mythology such as Ifrits, demons, and ▶



The combat will have the same attack/block/counterattack feel of the original *Prince of Persia* games, but will be deeper.







The camera positions automatically, but a planned "look" function will let you examine your environment.

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Red Orb
PUBLISHER → Mindscape
RELEASE DATE → Second half '99
3D SUPPORT → Direct3D, Glide, OpenGL

INTEREST GAUGE

INTERESTED — EXCITED — AROUSED

THE HYPE

The insanely popular *Prince of Persia* gameplay gets all the 3D goodness of today's technology.

THE HURDLE

Third-person perspective games have a bad rap at PCXL, and *PoP3D* has no multiplayer mode (we get lonely).

THE HIT

The stunning animation, brutal weapons, and ingenious traps are in keeping with *Prince of Persia*'s brilliant legacy.

FIVE QUESTIONS

PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D'S **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ANDREW PEDERSON GOOD-NATUREDLY PUT UP WITH PCXL'S INANE FIVE QUESTIONS.**

Q: So Mindscape is taking over as publisher of *Prince of Persia 3D*. Any plans for say, *Prince of Persio Teaches Typing*?
A: Actually that was discussed, but Jordan rejected the blatant exploitation of the Prince, so we scrapped the idea and are pursuing the *Prince of Persia Calligraphy Workshop*, which we feel is more in line with the brand.

Q: What about action figures?
A: We have been approached by an Iranian fast-food chain called Jack in the Mosque to produce Prince action figures. Currently we are in negotiations and I am not at liberty to discuss the terms of the arrangement.

Q: What can the Prince provide gamers that Lara Croft just can't?
A: The Prince has a much better ass (*uhh, this concerns us*). Also, the sword-fighting will provide a level of combat that is more satisfying than a simple "jump around a lot and let the auto-aiming take out the bad guy" approach. The swordfighting is not intended to be a button-mashing experience, but one that requires skill and precision. Also, I think we've done a better job at making the Prince feel real; you won't see him moonwalking as much as some other videogame characters. Obviously, the fact that the Prince is in 12th century Persia where we can mix both realistic and mythological/fantasy elements allows us to put him in levels and worlds that Lara could never be in. Because our world does not need to conform to a grid we can create environments that are more interesting. Lastly, the types and variety of enemies are radically different, as is the weaponry.

Q: What's up with the Prince's new turban? Does that feather have any significance?
A: You know what they say about guys with big feathers ...

Q: How did the Prince get to be so athletic, sitting around being rich all day?
A: Ask the Princess!



The Prince is adjusting well to his new life as a polygon.

genies. "The sword is your average standard weapon, the staff has a longer reach and does more damage but is slower, while the double blades are quick and have the ability to attack from two directions at once," Pederson says. The Prince will also have a bow and arrow, but it will be used more as a strategic sniping weapon, and he'll solve the occasional puzzle with a magic arrow. "We don't expect to see the Prince storm into a room and take out 20 guards machine-gun fashion. That's just not very Princelike," Pederson admits. (PCXL, however, will be pleased if they can incorporate a machine-gun type weapon into this 12th century arsenal.)

The Prince now has three attacks instead of just one and can dodge out of the way of some attacks. Weapons are also planned to incorporate special moves (simple combos, special attacks, and the like). Still, Pederson explains, "We haven't gone quite so overboard as in a fighting game like *Tekken*; we didn't want to overwhelm our players with to-string combos and the like." There will even be times when you'll want to sneak around enemies instead of fighting.

Even more treacherous than the combat are the lethal traps. "We are going to have about 50% classic traps (spikes, slicers, floor plates, etc.) and 50% new ones like catapults or angle blades that protrude from the floor, slicing off your ankles and as you fall forward, cutting your body in progressively smaller pieces. We are also going to be combining traps, so if for example you inadvertently step on a catapult, it might fling you onto a set of barbed spikes," says Pederson.

Excellent. These gruesome hazards are the best kind of puzzles, and will certainly help this single-player-only game. And with legend Jordan Mechner involved, we're reassured. The killing may not be as fast as we usually like, but the bloody traps should redeem things. Now if they can get Salma Hayak to play the princess and put in some bodice ripping, it'll definitely earn PCXL's seal of approval.

— CARRIE SHEPHERD ***dressed as Jeannie five Halloweens aga.***





OTHER PRINCES

Naturally, Prince of Persia 3D made us think about other princes in our past and their place in history.



THE ARTIST FORMERLY KNOWN AS PRINCE
RULED--> The '80s with glam funk, erotic screams, and really high heels
PRINCESS--> Mayte
WEAPON OF CHOICE--> Ever-changing identity to keep the enemy confused
PLACE IN HISTORY--> Forever remembered for humping stages, speakers, and every exhibitionist woman (and man, we've heard) in sight



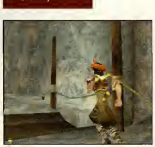
FRESH PRINCE OF BEL-AIR
RULED--> Bel-Air (duh!)
PRINCESS--> Jada Pinkett
WEAPON OF CHOICE--> Goofy laugh to startle opponents
PLACE IN HISTORY--> Gettin' jiggy wit da music, TV, and movies



PRINCE CHARLES
RULED--> Nothing really (well, but he's a decent polo player
PRINCESS--> Di-ed. Now seen running around with hideous troll Camilla Parker-Bowles
WEAPON OF CHOICE--> Enormous ears to distract foes while he summons royal guard
PLACE IN HISTORY--> Ugly guy with big ears who married Diana



PRINCE ALBERT PIERCING
RULED--> Out any chance of getting a nice girl
PRINCESS--> Gwen Stefani, Courtney Love, and other assorted skanks
WEAPON OF CHOICE--> Ball and chain
PLACE IN HISTORY--> Painful fad that will forever scar recipients physically and emotionally



Loose trousers help the Prince remain comfortable on his quest to rescue the Princess.



© 1998 Sierra On-Line, Inc. Published by Sierra On-Line, Inc.® and ™ designate trademarks of or licensed to Sierra On-Line, Inc., Bellevue, WA 98007.
All rights reserved. Image is a Registered trademark of Chrysler Corporation Corp. and is used under license. © CHRYSLER CORPORATION.

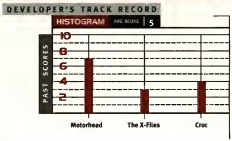
SIERRA SPORTS
Play the sport

It takes off. You feel it. And you control everything from arcade-style action to full-on simulation. Introducing Viper Racing from Sierra Sports. With real-world tuning features upgrading your stock Viper to a 700 hp GTS-R. Test your skills against your own best laps with the ghost car feature. Pay the price for realistic tuning with hyper-realistic damage modelling. And drive anywhere technology means the rapids of Siberia with the pavement. This Viper is unlike anything you've ever driven. Or flown.





Go to http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411: Product Number 43



Alien vs. Predator

Better really, really late than never

Apparently Fox was actually playing with the idea of making *Alien vs. Predator* into a movie, which would have gone well with the game. This might explain why this game has yet to come out after years of development (it actually appeared on some old, unwanted console years ago). But whatever the reason, the delay isn't gonna hurt, cuz the two licenses have aged like fine wine.

You guessed it, it's a first-person shooter that lets you play as one of three species: the oi' lovable Alien we've grown fond of over the years (no, I don't mean Alf), the warlike Predator best known for its cool cloaking effect, and the hapless but not helpless humans caught in the middle of a war between the other two. Bring it on, baby, sounds like a trip.

Says *AvP*'s comic-book-hero-named Producer, David Stalker, "We're putting the Alien, Colonial Marine, and Predator in an environment that looks and sounds like one of their movies." But hopefully not too much like *Predator 2*. Instead of simply having different skins and even characteristics, Fox intends these three species to play radically differently from each other.

"It's not about changing your skin, but about changing your whole perspective," says Stalker. The Colonial Marines (the ones getting killed throughout *Aliens*) are the most accessible of the three, and play very much like the legions of *Quake* and other first-person shooter Marines inspired by these memorable supporting characters. Your main weapon is the trusty pulse rifle with a grenade launcher attached, and the motion tracker will let you know where the enemy's attacking from and when. The strength of the Marine is in being able







In Earl Wong's Manhattan apartment, a couple of mutant cockroaches meet their maker.

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Fox Interactive
PUBLISHER → Fox Interactive
RELEASE DATE → Q1 '99
3D SUPPORT → Direct3D

INTEREST GAUGE

INTERESTED | EXCITED | AROUSED

THE HYPE

I can't think of two better licenses to pit head to head. OK, maybe I can (see sidebar).

THE HURDLE

Getting attention could be difficult. As *Rebellion* so clearly shows, even the best licenses can't save a crap game.

THE HIT

At the very least, you'll get a chance to yell out all your favorite lines from *Aliens*.







Damn! Here I am in the cargo loader, and no alien queens to fight!

to "tool up" with a host of weaponry to fight off the ravenous hordes.

If cloaking devices and scalping your prey is your bag, then the Predator's for you. Its unique arsenal and abilities lend it toward a skulking, sniping style. I foresee plenty of one-shot, one-slash kills in its future.

And finally there's the Alien, which according to Stalker is the "biggest leap" in play style of the three. You only have your jaws, tail, and claws with which to rip out someone's innards, and you grow stronger and tougher with each kill. But if the natural weapons of the Alien aren't as powerful as the guns and knives of his fleshy opponents, then it makes up for it with blinding speed and its ability to cling to any surface — your enemies won't know what hit 'em. "There's nothing quite like the first time you sink your jaws into someone's forehead!" says Stalker. This could be worth the cover charge right here.

AvP runs under some proprietary business that allowed Fox to implement the gameplay features it needed (like the wall climbing) without having to rewrite a bunch of someone else's code. "It's not intended to be a rival engine to *Quake II*, *Unreal*, LithTech, or whatever, and it wasn't built to be made widely available." Despite this disclaimer, as you can see from the screens, it's no slouch in the graphics department — something I was a bit apprehensive about until now.

The single-player game will be distinctly different for each of the three species, where an overarching storyline ties together the core levels in which the conflict takes place. The multiplayer game sounds like it could be awesome, with the three different classes and playing styles.

"Multiplayer is a hoot," Stalker agrees. "It's really funny how people tend to adopt the character of the species they choose to play. On my way to lunch the other day I passed someone in the office hissing, sticking his tongue out, and trying to jump up to stick onto the ceiling! Obviously someone had played one too many deathmatches!"

It will take some monumental bonehead maneuvers to mess up this formula: two outstanding licenses, a new graphics engine, and a cool-sounding acronym. Of the three, the acronym is obviously the most important thing.

— ED LEE *hos o second set of jaws but only uses them to mysteriously open beer when no one's looking.*

LICENSE WARS

AvP could be the start of a hot new trend in gaming: pitting two rival licenses against each other!

THE BRADY BUNCH VS. THE PARTRIDGE FAMILY
CONCEPT—> It's the kids who slept with Florence Henderson vs. the kids who sang with Shirley Jones in the ultimate team battle game
WHO'D WIN—> A tight match would come down to the final showdown — Battle of the Bands. A stunning version of "I Think I Love You" would narrowly beat out the well-choreographed "Sunshine Day"

MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL VS. ALLY MCBEAL
CONCEPT—> Overweight couch potatoes versus anorexic and neurotic feminists in a battle for the hearts and mindshare of the American people. Who doesn't want to see Calista Flockhart get pancaked by Gilbert Brown?
WHO'D WIN—> There are no winners. Instead, many sad PW'ed men have to sip on white wine and talk about relationships when they should be swilling beer, sitting on their fat ass, and saying things like "Get up, you pussy"

BAYWATCH VS. PACIFIC BLUE
CONCEPT—> Who needs a concept when you have a collection of hot women in bathing suits? Just get 'em wet, it's that simple
WHO'D WIN—> Everybody wins

FIVE QUESTIONS

FOX'S PRISCILLA BOURBONNAIS PUT ON A DISGUISE AND TRIED TO PASS HERSELF OFF AS PRODUCER DAVID STALKER FOR OUR FIVE QUESTIONS (NICE TRY PRIS!).

Q: Who would win in a fight, Ah-nuld or Ripley?
A: Ripley — she kicks ass hard!

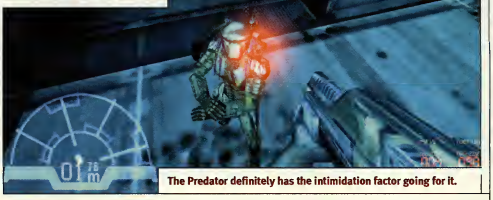
Q: What makes you smarter, Smartfood or Smartles?
A: Smarties, but not the crappy American kind, the luscious candy-covered chocolate beans from Britain.

Q: Have you ever crushed Smarties into a fine powder and attempted to snort them? Did you get a buzz?
A: Yes, the U.K. Smarties leave chocolate streaks under your nose. And the chocolate buzz was a very messy experience.

Q: What game are you most looking forward to playing, besides your own?
A: Fox's *When Animals Attack*.

Q: How hard was it to motion capture live aliens?
A: Aliens aren't such a problem. But getting all the little white mo-cap balls on the face huggers can be tricky.





The Predator definitely has the intimidation factor going for it.



With the year drawing to a close, we'd like to recall some after-dinner remarks made in June by the President of our Games Division as the Imagine Media family gathered at Yosemite.

"Always advocate the making of great products.
Products that mean something to people.
Products that matter.
Products that touch peoples' lives.
Products that make bold promises
And keep them.
Products that don't suck.
Never shoot for an easy opshun.
(Always use spell-check.)
Be funny.
Be different.
Be exciting.
Be an Imagine-er.

Contribute good vibes.
Good ideas.
Strong opinions.

Give of yourself.

Be grateful for the people around you this minute.

Recycle. Flush. Floss.

Respect everyone.
Create.
Don't talk.
Do.
Don't dream.
Be.

Never forget that things could be much worse.
And frequently are for most people.

Be proud of your accomplishments.
And excited about what you might yet accomplish.

Take initiative.

Remember to use *The Force*.
Be brave.

Make passion your anchor.
It's the energy of life.
The energy of each other."

imagine MEDIA WITH PASSION

Don't Let The Thief Sneak Up On You!

Enter to WIN Thief Merchandise TODAY!

THIEF

THE DARK PROJECT

www.eidosinteractive.com

5 GRAND PRIZES

- 3DFX VOODOO II 3D accelerator
- Thief: The Dark Project - the game
- Official Strategy Guide by Prima Publishing
- Thief: The Dark Project T-shirt
- Interact Accessories' Propad 6 AND the NEW Windows 95 & 98 Gameshark

10 FIRST PRIZES

- Thief: The Dark Project - the game
- Official Strategy Guide by Prima Publishing
- Interact Accessories' NEW Windows 95 & 98 Gameshark

15 SECOND PRIZES

- Thief: The Dark Project T-shirt
- Interact Accessories' Propad 6

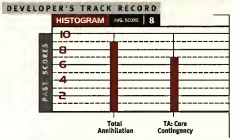
LOOKING GLASS STUDIOS

INTERACT

PRIMA

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

Winners will be drawn on March 1st, 1999. No purchase necessary. To enter, send a postcard with your name and address to: Thief: The Dark Project/PC Accelerator contest, 651 Brannan Street, San Francisco, CA 94107. No purchase or payment of any money is necessary to enter. One entry per household. Entries must be received by February 28th, 1999. All entries become exclusive property of EIDOS Interactive and will not be acknowledged or returned. Only one prize per family, organization, or household. Prizes: Five Grand Prize Winners will receive an 3Dfx Voodoo II board, a copy of Thief: The Dark Project, The Official Strategy Guide by Prima Publishing, a Thief t-shirt, as well as Interact Accessories' Propad 6 and Windows 95/98 Gameshark. 10 First Prize Winners will receive a copy of Thief: The Dark Project, The Official Strategy Guide by Prima Publishing, as well as Interact Accessories' Windows 95/98 Gameshark. 15 Second Prize Winners will receive a Thief t-shirt as well as Interact Accessories' Propad 6. Eligibility: Sweepstakes open to residents of United States and Canada, excluding Montreal. Non-compliance with the time parameters contained herein or return of any prize/prize notification as undeliverable will result in disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. In the event of disqualification, Grand Prizes, First Prizes, and Second Prizes will be awarded to the next available entry. Runner up winners will be notified by mail. By acceptance, winner(s) agree to the use of their name and /or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade, or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. EIDOS Interactive is not responsible for any damages, taxes, or expense that consumers might incur as a result of this contest or receipt of prize. Winners accepting prize(s) agree that all prize(s) are awarded on the condition that EIDOS Interactive and its agents, representatives, and employees will have no liability whatsoever for any injuries, losses or damages of any kind resulting from acceptance, possession, or use of the prize(s). List of winners: For a list of winners, please write to Eidos Interactive, Thief: The Dark Project/PC Accelerator Contest, 651 Brannan Street, San Francisco, CA 94107 after February 28, 1999. Restrictions: Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All federal, state and local regulations apply. Sponsors. This sweepstakes is sponsored by EIDOS Interactive, Interact and Prima Publishing. Thief: The Dark Project is a trademark of Looking Glass Studios. © 1998 Looking Glass Studios. Eidos Interactive is a trademark of EIDOS plc. © 1998 Eidos. All rights reserved.



Total Annihilation: Kingdoms

When a Commander becomes a Monarch, *TA* gets *Kingdoms*

Total Annihilation made a real impact on gamers by addressing the RTS genre and basically blowing it up. *Kingdoms* is a follow-up of sorts, and having spent a while looking at it in action, it's fair to say that it's not going to be a mediocre time filler/cash generator while *Total Annihilation 2* (likely to release in 2000) is in development.



Some concepts are the same as you would expect from a game using a modified version of the *TA* engine. It has a top-down perspective, contains masses of units (160 are currently planned), utilizes a similar interface, and features a lot of explosions, this time created by various mystical, magical shenanigans.

But where *TA* sported two armies, *Kingdoms* will see what are essentially the four elements in battle. The Arramon, Veruna, Taros, and Zhon armies represent earth, water, fire, and air. Each will have its own distinctive style that corresponds to its supporting element (Arramon have basic swordsmen grunts (among others), while Taros use magic, for example).

In place of the Commander is the Monarch. He will be responsible for buildings, including fortifications that are going to have their own AI at work. Walls are being designed in what seems like a specific response to the "tank rush." Building a hundred basic sword units might take a while, but a stone archers tower will repel the attack. Now if those swordsmen had brought a siege engine with them ... different story.

Great attention to detail is paid to individual units in the playable version we saw. When a blast goes off, cannon teams cover their ears, the rudder on an impressively detailed warship turns the correct angle to move, and you can clearly make out the guy riding on the back of one of the dragons (the SkyKnight unit — one of between six and eight dragons likely to be featured).

The concept of recycling the dead has been resurrected (ahem). Rather than throwing the dead bodies in an incinerator for ▶

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Cavedog
PUBLISHER → Cavedog
RELEASE DATE → March '99
3D SUPPORT → Direct3D

INTEREST GAUGE

INTERESTED | EXCITED | AROUSED

THE HYPE

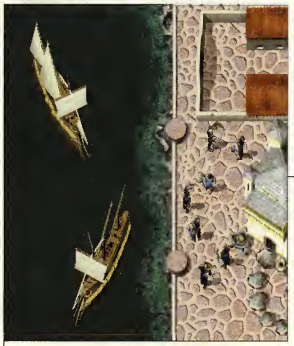
TA taught Cavedog a lesson. *Kingdoms* certainly won't be found wanting, but it will be scaling back on units.

THE HURDLE

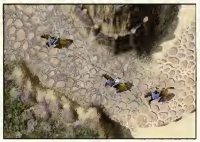
The first genuine competitor to *WarCraft 2* in the fantasy RTS department. That's tough, though, since *W2* is now quite old.

THE HIT

Total Annihilation was a very well-designed RTS game. From the same stable, *Kingdoms* probably won't be worse.



Off-shore sieges will bring back those *WarCraft 2* moments.



Don't worry, sir, here comes the cavalry.



Dragons are always cool, and riding one must be cooler.

FIVE QUESTIONS

***KINGDOMS* PROJECT LEADER CLAYTON KAUZLARIC FACED THE INQUISITION KNOWN AS THE FIVE QUESTIONS.**

Q: How many hours was *TA* played in the Cavedog offices, just for fun, after the game shipped?

A: Too many to count. It's a strange admission, but we really like our own game. Even during the preship crunch, team members were frequently here until 3 a.m. just playing. That's four or five hours after a 12- to 14-hour day. The only thing that stopped the daily LAN fest was *Kingdoms* kicking into high gear.

Q: In the last, say, week of a game's production, how do you all deal with the sleep deprivation?

A: Fortunately, we're in the center of a serious caffeine mecca here in the Seattle area. But when the powers of the almighty bean fail, there's always the comfy old couch in my office.

Q: What's the biggest enhancement to the core engine in *Kingdoms* over the original *TA*?

A: That's hard to pick. True, we have an existing code base to work from, but we've rewritten just about everything. If I have to choose just one, I'd say new scripting system for missions and multiplayer maps. It blurs the distinction between those two things. The sort of dramatic, orchestrated events you normally associate with a mission can now be a part of the multiplayer experience. Players will have the ability to script any event within the engine's capabilities — at any time during the game. I think we'll barely scratch the surface of this system before we ship. It'll be up to the Inventiveness and imagination of the players to explore the script system fully.

Q: Who's the best *TA* player in the office?

A: I'd have to go with Steve Kuo, our assistant producer. Garrett Link, our unit tuner/balancer, is a close second.

Q: Who comes up with the concepts for 160-plus units? And why?

A: Many of the unit ideas came from the team during pre-production. Everyone threw their notions into a big pile. Then Ron and I blended this with lists of our own to rough out the build hierarchies for the four sides. That formed part of the basis for the first draft of our design doc. We ask ourselves a few key questions when we're considering a unit: Is it fun? Can it be balanced? Can we create it in a reasonable amount of time without our heads exploding?



Fry bugs with a magnifying glass as a kid, pay for it later!

power (as we all do, right?), the good sides of the battle (earth and water) have clerics who can resurrect the dead (no word on Elvis), while the evil sides can bring them back as zombies. According to Lead Designer Clayton Kauzlaric, the two-page AI scripts for each unit in *TA* are being upped to 10 pages each in *Kingdoms*. The result will be smarter units with a great deal more variety.

In the single-player game, whichever side you take is going to be supported by a cohesive storyline that progresses through the use of cut scenes. Specific characters will also play a role in the unfolding events, and even normal units will have a real worth as they gain experience points in battle and get better during the course of a mission.

A new function set to throw a spanner in the mortal works is divine intervention. Monarchs can build temples to deities, who being the omnipotent, omniscient beings they are, sometimes want a controlling hand in the events of man. It could be a tide-turning event when a god turns up and plays a divine hand. Of course, if opponents also have a temple and their deity notices this intervention, it could spell trouble of the apocalyptic, get-everyone-the-hell-away kind.

Kingdoms is also set to be Cavedog's last software game — all future releases will require a 3D accelerator. As with the original, it supports fogging effects and a few other niceties through D3D and generally looks better than any other RTS game.

This early look at *Kingdoms* was a pleasant surprise. I reckon there's a hardcore fantasy audience out there waiting impatiently for Blizzard to provide the tiniest morsel of information about *WarCraft 3*. However, *Kingdoms* certainly looks set to fill that craving in what's becoming Cavedog's hallmark style.

— Sleep, sleep, **ROB SMITH***'s kingdom for some sleep.*

THROW ME A BONE

Cavedog is hitting the world of online gaming services with Boneyards, set to b- in limited public beta by mid-November, and releasing free of charge to the general public in late December. Debuting with *Total Annihilation*, Boneyards should support all of Cavedog's coming games in 1999 (including *Elysium*, *Good and Evil*, and *Amen: The Awakening*). At the, ahem, core of the service will be a large-scale *TA* battle called Galactic Wars, where the two opposing forces will fight for planetary control, zeroing in on the enemy's homeworld. The battle lines will change as the state of the game is updated at 1 a.m. every day. We asked Cavedog's senior director of online games, Scott Wallin, for the lowdown.

Q: HOW ARE YOU GOING TO ENSURE THAT ARM AND CORE HAVE A SIMILAR NUMBER OF PLAYERS?
A: Initially, we are not planning to "force" a balance in the number of players on each side. We want players to be able to choose the side they want to play for. If an imbalance develops, we could do any number of things, such as offering special incentives to entice players to one side or the other, etc.

Q: HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL YOU BE SUPPORTING ONLINE AT ONCE?
A: We will initially be deploying two server clusters (East and West coast). To begin, we should be able to handle several thousand users at any given time (this is before any expansion to the server network).

Q: WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO ATTRACT NEW PLAYERS TO ONLINE *TA* SO THAT THEY DON'T REMAIN PRIVATES [ALL BEGINNING PLAYERS HAVE THIS RANK, RISING EVENTUALLY TO SUPREME COMMANDER] FOREVER?
A: Well, attracting new players basically involves getting them to come on board with *Total Annihilation* in the first place. To that end, we are releasing the *Total Annihilation Commander Pack* in November, which will be Boneyards-capable out of the box. The pack includes *Total Annihilation*, the two expansion packs, and a strategy guide.

We are planning to reward experienced players for helping new players get started. In fact, to reach the highest ranks in the Galactic Wars, a player must put in time "training" new recruits.



We haven't witnessed fantasy slaughterfests on this scale since the heyday of *WarCraft 2*.



Test Drive Off-Road 2, the only 4-wheeling experience that's guaranteed to get you high.

- Hummer™ exclusive- The only place you'll drive the world famous Hummer
- Awesome Soundtrack Featuring: Sevendust, Gravity Kids, and Fear Factory
- Dual Shock™ Analog Controller support- Vibration so real, you risk whiplash!
- World Tour mode- Blow away your competition in any of 6 different track classes to open hidden tracks and buy new vehicles and/or upgrades.
- 12 gnarly tracks in 6 real world locations- Go muddoggin', spray rooster tails, blow snow, churn up sand and surf- or bash, crash and smash your opponents into boulders, trees, cliffs or mud pits.
- Choose from 20 killer vehicles!- Including all your favorite off-road behemoths- Dodge® Ram, Ford Explorer,™ Jeep® Wrangler, Ford F-150,™ Chrmouth (FW), Jeep® Grand Cherokee, Dodge® T-Rex and more...

For your free Test Flight, download the demo at www.accolade.com **To order direct, call 1.800.245.7744**

ACCOLADE





Win the World Tour and upgrade your 4x4



Fun, fun, fun in the mud, mud, mud!



Race from the Alps to the beaches of Hawaii



Catch serious air off insane jumps



Off-Road mayhem at its best!

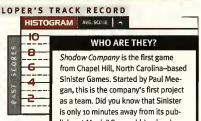




Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 77

Test Drive Off-Road is a registered trademark of Accolade, Inc. ©1998 Accolade, Inc. All rights reserved. All other trademarks are of their respective companies and are used under license by Accolade, Inc. PlayStation® and the PlayStation® logos are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Hummer® and the vehicle's grille design are the registered trademarks of AM General Corp.

DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD



WHO ARE THEY?

Shadow Company is the first game from Chapel Hill, North Carolina-based Sinister Games. Started by Paul Meegan, this is the company's first project as a team. Did you know that Sinister is only 10 minutes away from its publisher, I-Magic? So would-be developers, find a large publisher and open up shop next door.

Shadow Company

The A-Team would be impressed

Here at PCXL Towers we're expecting a slew of *Rainbow Six*-style games that incorporate team strategy and real-world locations. NovaLogic's *Delta Force* closely fits this model, but Sinister's *Shadow Company* has a slightly different twist. It may have the familiar themes and locations, but it also has a significant realtime strategy skew that more closely resembles the Eidos game *Commandos*.

You're dropped in the role of a crack commando force performing covert actions around the world, like the A-Team. In a smoothly scrolling and rotating 3D environment, you assign orders to your squad in typical RTS fashion — selecting and clicking — and watch their little 3D selves carry out your commands. The camera control is intuitive and smooth — you scroll the screen by moving the cursor to the edges; plus, by holding down the right button, you can fluidly rotate as well as zoom and tilt the view in just one motion. It's easy to keep track of your characters' locations as well as terrain features, structures, and other elements that are of tactical importance.

"The 3D engine allows the player to exploit line of sight, obstructions, high ground, and other 'real-world' tactical devices," says designer Paul Meegan. "Obviously, to complete the equation, the player needs a camera that doesn't limit him/her to one point of view." The 3D units make the world seem more believable and also provide a lot of flexibility in animation — for example, a 3D mercenary that crouches while under fire presents a smaller target to the attacker.

Shadow Company will use a campaign system that is basically a series of eight large game maps. Taking place in all sorts of locales, from sub-Saharan Africa to South America to Arctic Russia, the action will unfold in places like prisons, nuclear submarine bases, and oil platforms. Each of the eight campaigns has multiple objectives, some crucial, others



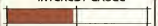


As dawn breaks over the terrorist courtyard, the A-Team attacks.

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Sinister Games
PUBLISHER → Interactive Magic
RELEASE DATE → Q2 '99
3D SUPPORT → Direct3D

INTEREST GAUGE



THE HYPE

Real-world settings and team play are two emerging themes in gaming, and *Shadow Company* has both.

THE HURDLE

I-Magic isn't exactly known for its string of smash hits in this genre.

THE HIT

The engine looks like a winner; now Sinister Games has to make sure the content lives up.



Uh oh guys, it looks like Mr. T will have to save us again.





Get a load of the armored tractor, terrorist suckas!

not. They'll cover the gamut of para-military stuff like search-and-destroy missions and gun-running to hostage rescue.

Each member of the 12-person squad has a unique personality and skills so you can pick and choose a perfect team for any given task. But once members die, they stay dead, so you'll have to use that noggin, unless you wanna be beatin' it against the monitor when your entire squad gets wiped cause you sent 'em in charging. You basically have to be sneaky and smart, or as we like to say, "sneakysmart."

One cool thing that stands out is the ability to use an assortment of vehicles during your missions. Helicopters, tanks, jeeps, boats, snowmobiles, and other machinery are included. "We are striving for a great deal of interactivity," says Meegan. "Our basic premise is that if you see it, you can use it. If you can find and steal vehicles, you can use them. In some cases, they will make a tough objective much more manageable."

Multiplayer will include both cooperative and adversarial modes. You'll be able to control a few characters each in cooperative, a feature first seen in *Commandos*. Internet and LAN play for up to 16 players will be supported.

Considering the great attention to detail and the fact that your troops will have to be managed carefully and effectively à la *Commandos*, it looks as if *Shadow Company* has a real chance of drawing both a realtime strategy crowd as well as some *Rainbow Six* vets.

— **ED LEE** *likes bashing his head against his monitor when on deadline.*

FIVE QUESTIONS

PAUL MEEGAN, CEO/DESIGNER OF SINISTER GAMES, SCARES US, QUITE FRANKLY.

Q: How are you avoiding the Shadow Jinx, which apparently has hit every game with the word "shadow" in the title?
A: Since all games with the word "company" in the title do well, we figure that they'll cancel each other out, and we'll come out even.

Q: So what were some of the inspirations for this game?
A: We started the project before *Commandos*, *Jagged Alliance 2*, or *Rainbow Six* were common knowledge, so we really only had earlier stuff to be inspired by. An article about Executive Outcomes — a real South African mercenary company — got us thinking, though.

Q: How many hidden Easter eggs are in the game?
A: Look for General Lee, KITT from Knight Rider, and the A-Team van. Also, Leigh from I-Magic PR should be making an appearance.

Q: What games are you most looking forward to playing, besides your own?
A: Hungry Hungry Hippos, Dig-Dug, Twister, *Quake III*, and Chutes and Ladders.

Q: How many former anti-terrorists are on your development team?
A: ANTI-terrorists?

A-TEAM EPISODES

EPISODE SUMMARIES:

1. The team gets hired to save someone's beautiful daughter from some bearded minorities

2. They break Murdock out of a mental ward (usually involves a helicopter and disguises)

3. Mr. T says, "I pity da fool," "helluva," or "sucka"

4. 40,000 rounds of ammunition are fired and no one bleeds

5. A bad guy's jeep goes off the road and flips over (but the camera stays long enough to show that no one was really hurt)

6. Face gets the chick and both of them get held hostage without messing up their hair

7. The team builds either an armored tractor or an armored school bus (depending on budget) that proceeds to kick the shit out of the bad guys' tanks and jeeps

8. Hannibal says, "I love it when a plan comes together," when actually Mr. T did all the work

We loved this show.





Damn, that Mr. T is hella tough! Damn right, suckas!

PCXL.IGN.COM

YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT WE'LL DO NEXT
(BUT, THEN AGAIN, NEITHER DO WE)

POLLS NEWS FRAGS

DAILY POLLS

PCXL'S DAILY POLL

THE QUESTION:
We are busy creating our December issue and don't have time for our usual round table discussion on babes. So we leave it to you our trusted readers to pick the most righteous babe. Who can it be now? (apologies for the 80's influence in those last two sentences, just can't shake the 80's dammit)

- Cameron Diaz
- Heather Graham
- Sarah Michelle Gellar (Buffy)
- Jenaene Garofolo
- Brad Pitt (we do have 1 or 2 female readers)
- Elizabeth Hurley

Vote!

YESTERDAYS RESULTS

THE QUESTION:
Life without computer games would be most like:

The Internet without porn: 22.81%

Pam Anderson without silicon: 25.00%

An actual life: 21.88%

Your mom: 14.06%

PCXL without gratuitous references to Pam Anderson: 4.69%

Pizza without anchovies: 1.56%

Thank You For Voting

DAILY NEWS

pcxl.ign.com

August 28th, 1998

"The Rumors Of My Death Are Greatly Exaggerated"

John Romero is happy to be alive, but apparently the scare caused further delays in Dalhatma

Late last night the mentally trustworthy Adrenaline Vault posted a story that John Romero had been shot dead. A few hours later when the confusion cleared they ran a story saying, "John Romero Alive". The hilarious piece (with a picture of Romero's head on a dead body) was a hoax but apparently the clever chaps over at Ion Storm were not too thinking about the things that are really important. Dalhatma and irrational are the real victims in this story, since the incompetent reporting is likely to cause another delay to the long awaited games release.

WITH A HEAVY DOSE OF SARCASM

DAILY FRAG



Today's Daily Frag:

HANSON

BABES

AND THE ALL-NEW

BABE-O-RAMA



To those of you who think she has a boy body... what kind of boys do you hang around?

Name: Natalie Jane Imbruglia

Age: 23 (D.O.B 4th Feb. 1975)

Place of Birth: Sydney, Australia

GRAPHICS

Absolutely stunning! Enticing pouty lips, coupled with penetrating eyes give her a face that just screams sex. Her body is tight and toned but some may complain that she isn't filling up her bra.

SOUND

The accent goes a long way towards making Nat a sexy woman. Of course she does have a decent singing voice as well.

DEPTH

This miniature pop star started out as a TV actress, loves to drink and smokes. She is the type of girl who would be great to go out with not just but over. Plus she looks like she might know a few tricks in the bedroom as well.

REALISM

Obviously her breasts are real (although this is debatably a bad thing), but we wonder about her inflated lips. Either she gets pearled in the mouth before photoshoots or

DEMOS

pcxl.ign.com

DEMOS	SELECT A GENRE
ADVENTURE	SIMULATION
HARDWARE	STRATEGY

SEARCH

CODES BY FIRST LETTER OF GAME TITLE

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z #

DEMOS

PCXL.IGN.COM
WHAT'S NOT TO LOVE?



Just Launch the missiles.

Want a flying game that's less work and more play? Then get ready to defend your country with gun barrels blazing and both engines on afterburner in Top Gun®: Hornet's Nest™. It's the thrill-stuffed, action-packed flying game based on the awesome Hollywood epic. Dogfight, bomb and barrel-roll your way through 30 feverish missions in intense 3-D environments. All without logging a mile in flight school – this is a kick-the-tires, light-the-fires-and-go style of game. So why waste time learning commands, when you can waste enemies instead? You're Maverick, so strap yourself in and go.

TOP GUN®
HORNET'S NEST™



Available on Windows 95 CD-ROM. Visit your local retailer or call 1-800-695-GAME, day or night, U.S. or Canada.

TOP GUN® & ©1998 Paramount Pictures. All rights reserved. MICROPROSE is a registered trademark and HORNET'S NEST is a trademark of MicroProse, Inc. or its affiliated companies. All other trademarks are the property of their respective holders.

MICROPROSE
www.microprose.com

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 71

DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD

HISTOGRAM AVG. SCORE | -

PAST SCORES: 10, 8, 6, 4, 2

WHO ARE THEY?

Appeal was founded in 1995 by three guys with experience beginning on the C64, moving on through the Amiga (including a game called *Unreal*). Work began in R&D of voxels and scenery creation. Then Appeal was formed, signed with Infogrames, and *Outcast* began.

Outcast

It's French, it's voxel-based, and it's still promising

At the European Computer Trade Show (ECTS) in September 1997 the game that stood out most for me was *Outcast*. Highlighted on a huge projection monitor, the background colors dazzled and the foreground characters moved with fluid animation (and packed some explosive weaponry). It was unveiled as a third-person action/adventure that, amazingly, didn't look like a *Tomb Raider* clone.

A year later the look certainly has not changed. The French flair for artistic creativity is quite evident in the moody, sunset-draped backdrops, with realtime lighting casting shadows off the main character and other denizens of the world you're exploring. As Carter Slade, the setup and storyline throws you into the alien world of Adelpha, where the one mission goal is to stop a scientific experiment from getting too out of control and destroying Earth. That small task involves traveling across six huge and unique worlds.

The religion of Adelpha states that a savior will come from the sky. Is that you? Not necessarily. You came through a portal with three others. They could still be alive. To foster a spirit of nonlinearity within a focused story, you get to wander the environments and converse with the indigenous population. "There's a teaching mechanism with a progressive level of difficulty," explains Producer Jean-Yves Patay. "For example, one mission will get you running and jumping. If the game realizes that you're doing well, it will throw another mission at you that introduces another character manipulation technique."

Your actions within the world will seriously affect how NPCs respond. Start firing maniacally at innocent workers and they'll flee, running past other workers, who, if equally passive, might join the retreat. Each NPC has his own emotive value, and so if one is more aggressive, he may stand and fight. Depending on what you do and how you treat characters, an "aura" is created in the game engine that is passed ▶



These guys are tax collectors. They carry guns. And they're coming very soon to an IRS near you.









The voxel technology allows great detail without the smoothing of edges that 3D hardware brings.

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Appeal
PUBLISHER → Infogrames
RELEASE DATE → Spring '99
3D SUPPORT → None

INTEREST GAUGE

INTERESTED — EXCITED — AROUSED

THE HYPE

Outcast encompasses French style, is backed with intriguing substance in its storyline, and uses different technology.

THE HURDLE

It's French and comes with that baggage. Voxel-based action games are few and far between.

THE HIT

Detailed environments backed by a dynamic world of living characters should force you into the game.

FIVE QUESTIONS

SINCE WE DON'T UNDERSTAND FRENCH, *OUTCAST* PRODUCER JEAN-YVES PATAY KINDLY ANSWERED THE FIVE QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH. (UM, SORRY FOR FRAGGING FRANCE IN ISSUE TWO.)

Q: 3D acceleration and multiplayer are the two biggest PC gaming buzzwords. *Outcast* supports neither. How do you think this will affect the game (especially in the U.S.)?

A: We want to make a game in which the player can immerse himself in a convincing world. We want open areas; we want it to look as natural as possible. Is 3D acceleration the right solution now? We don't think so. *Outcast* is not multiplayer because you are part of an epic adventure that you can't experience in multiplayer. In *Outcast* you are the hero; you are in charge, and nobody else.

Q: Stereotype alert: French games have lots of style and little (or incomprehensible) substance. Do you think that's true?

A: What you say regarding French games is not completely false. There is a big difference between the U.S. and France. Where Americans create an experience for the players, French people create art (the author's self style). French authors are more interested in expressing their art than giving what the audience expects, and that's why you end up having French games/movies/books with a very elitist target (or absolutely no target and no audience at all). We do think this is a really wrong attitude, and we do think we need to make games so that people can enjoy them.

Q: What's the best (most offensive) stereotype that the French have for Americans (and English)?

A: From the only American guy we have on the team (and we do agree with his opinion), Americans are media cattle. No offensive stereotype for the English, they are too close to us.

Q: Are voxels a way of the future, or will they disappear for polys?

A: Voxels for games are a way of taking the landscape info in the memory database and drawing it on screen as fast as possible. When polys are fast enough (with second-generation accelerators) we'll be able to use them.

Q: How do you say "Your mother was a hamster and your father smelled of elderberries" in French?

A: That's *Holy Grail* right? Well, pick one of these:

(1) *Ta mère est tellement plate qu'on pourrait la faxer*

(2) *Ta mère est tellement vieille qu'elle a connu Burger King alors qu'il n'était que prince*

(3) *Ta mère est tellement jaune qu'a New-York tout le monde l'appelle "taxi!"*



Ripple effects are all done in software — very impressive.

to any NPC you meet. A log is kept of what you've done, but most NPCs won't hold a grudge if you don't help out immediately — they understand that there's a bigger mission at hand.

In an about-face on the usual hype of all-new powerful 3D-rendering engines powering the latest explosive action, Appeal's *Outcast* engine appears like a step backward. No 3D support, no multiplayer component, and (gasp) voxels. But while it's easy to guffaw, look at the screens. Up close, the jagged edges of the sharp voxels are prominent. From a distance (which, admittedly, is where you view most objects) it smoothes out considerably, creating some awesome environments.

Voxel terrain has reduced the number of polygons on screen compared to, say, *Tomb Raider*. This allows Appeal to use greater numbers of polys (and therefore get greater effects) on the motion-captured and hand-animated characters and buildings. One dinosaur in the swamp level looks staggering, moves with a fluidity that belies its size, and weighs in at some 2,500 polys, complete with bump-mapping done in software. The effect is already pretty impressive.

The action quotient won't be missing either, as you're armed with dynamite, an awesome flamethrower, a knife, or laser-guided gas grenades. Of the six main weapons, each can be upgraded with three power-up levels to add faster firing rates and more damage.

Appeal hopes to capture an immersive cinematic feel through the character control — using the keyboard to direct the character's directional movement, and a force-feedback joystick to move Slade's upper torso and gain some control over weapon targeting as he moves and fires. A 60-minute score recorded by the Moscow Symphony Orchestra, backed by a 24-person chorus, is designed to enhance the epic scale of the action in typical movie fashion.

If early clipping problems in the environments are overcome, the landscapes should be a joy to explore. Water rippling effects, all done in software, are a real sight to behold, as are some of the bigger creatures such as those that Slade can ride around the worlds. We'll reserve judgement on the core gameplay until we play a fuller beta, but *Outcast* has a feel and vibrancy that could set it apart in the crowded 3D action/adventure genre.

— Controry to popular belief,* ROB SMITH *was not forcibly outcost from his home country.

STYLE OVER SUBSTANCE

French-developed games are their creator's personal vision, and to hell with you philistines if you don't get any fun out of it. Allegedly. Here are some examples:

CITY OF THE LOST CHILDREN, Psygnosis
Incomprehensible French movie becomes ridiculously complicated adventure game

HARDLINE, Cryo
Even when French developers try to take on action, they resort to terrible FMV, on-rails shooting disaster

ALONE IN THE DARK, Infogrames
All style and no ... er, well, actually they were pretty excellent adventure games, damnit

DARK EARTH, Kalisto
Incredible scenery and art, and, er, a vibrant world full of adventure well worth playing through again. Damnit



FIFTH ELEMENT, Kalisto
Looks incredible. It's got Milla Jovovich instead of Lara. But substance has yet to be proven





Terrains haven't lost any detail — and you can see and shoot for miles.


Mar '98
Mar '98
Feb '98
Jan '98
Aug '97
July '97
July '97
June '97
June '97
Feb '97
Jan '97
Jan '97
Jan '97
Dec '97
Dec '97
EVEN MYTHS BECOME REAL
ON A FALCON
MYTH II
SOULBLIGHTER
CALL:
1-888-FALCON-1
WWW.FALCON-NW.COM
CUSTOM BUILT PCS STARTING AT $2,475 FOR GAME PLAYING, GAME DESIGN, GRAPHICS, OR EVEN GETTING SOME WORK DONE.
FALCON NORTHWEST
COMPUTER SYSTEMS
FRAMELIFE
MACH V

REVIEWS

KILLER GAME

Any game that receives a 9 or 10 from our ridiculous scoring system warrants this nifty logo. If you see the **PC ACCELERATOR** Killer Game stamp, you know it's a game worth buying. Only the true classics deserve this elite status, so don't expect to see this symbol often.

SUICIDE

If we're going to create a stamp for the truly great, then it's only fair to label the unforgivable shit as well. It takes an abominable score of 1 or 2 to qualify for the noose around the neck. Stay away from these games at all costs.

Testing ...

We performed a visual test this month, monitoring the facial expressions of our game reviewers. This new technique proved to be highly accurate. The animated, enthusiastic expression on Ed's face as he played *Shogo* foretold the game's high score. Meanwhile, Rob appeared listless as he yawned away while playing *Klingon Honor Guard*. On the other hand, Ed also looked pretty happy while he was playing *Dominant Species*, no doubt thinking of the delightfully scathing descriptors he could use to destroy the game in print. But luckily, we don't just rely on facial expressions. Our reviews are thorough and honest, so you'll never have to buy another crap game.



Shogo's *weapons kick ass, anime-style.*

CUT THE CRAP

Since we focus our coverage on fast-paced games, we don't get a chance to review every PC game that comes out. But in just a few words, we can tell you everything you need to know about the games we didn't review and cut out all the crap.

GAME	INSIGHT
DEER HUNTER II	The box has more 3D effects than the game
KNIGHTS AND MERCHANTS	Knights are OK, but what's with this merchant crap?
THE ROBOT CLUB	We don't want to be affiliated with this sort of dub
MIG-29 FULCRUM	Fly away!

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

Flawless. Perfect. Better than that sex dream with Uma Thurman and Salma Hayak	10
A true classic. An excellent game that is well worth the money	9
A great game, but may feature a few minor flaws that are easily overlooked	8
A good, solid game that lacks the inspiration or vision of a truly great game	7
A game that rises above the average due to a hook in style or gameplay	6
The definition of mediocrity, this game doesn't commit any major crime other than being ordinary	5
A game that doesn't exactly suck, but probably won't hold your interest for long	4
OK, maybe there's an element of redeeming value in this game, but it still sucks	3
Very little of interest, this game is deeply flawed and should be avoided	2
Utter crap — Complete shit – A barrel of bullocks – In other words it sucks really, really bad	1

CRITICAL ADD-ONS

Whenever a joystick, soundcard, or other computer accoutrement improves a game, we'll stick a corresponding logo on the review. We include only those devices that make the game better; just being compatible isn't good enough. If you don't see the logo, then that particular add-on doesn't do much for the game.

TILT

3D SOUND

GAMEPAD

MULTIPLAYER

STEERING WHEEL

FORCE FEEDBACK

JOYSTICK

ACCELE-RATED

This additional rating provides specific information on how a game performs on a variety of competing 3D chipsets. We test games on up to four major 3D cards and report back with the true test for any 3D accelerator: how it affects the game. We base these ratings on graphic enhancements, framerates, and performance to give you a good idea of how a game will perform on your 3D card.

(Note: Performance may vary depending on the card and the setup of your system)

ACCELE-RATED

CHIPSET

1	2	3
No significant difference from software, this game and card do not justify the expenditure	The card provides solid enhancements that make the game more immersive and enjoyable	This is what 3D cards are all about. Every effect is utilized, and the smooth framerate makes a huge gameplay difference

RATINGS

Our rating scale is a simple 1 to 10 — no decimal points, no obscure percentages, just a straight score that gets right to the point. Before we score games, they undergo countless hours of testing on different systems, with different 3D cards — our reviewers even play the games under the influence of various narcotics. In the end we stamp a single score on the game, which is essentially a numeric value of the game's worth. We love games and always try to look on the bright side, but when a pile of steaming crap comes in we won't hold back and won't allow our readers to waste their money on said crap. You can count on our reviews for honesty, insight, and maybe even a few laughs.

GRAPHICS

Rendering quality, framerates, and special effects all contribute to an immersive gaming experience.

SOUND

Visceral sound effects and appropriate music can help make a good game great.

DEPTH

How often you find yourself playing a game, and how long, are good indicators of its quality.

DESIGN

The backbone of a game is the overall vision behind it, from characters and weapons to levels and missions.

RATING

DEVELOPER -->	NovaLogic
PUBLISHER -->	NovaLogic
REQUIRED -->	P166, 48MB RAM, 318MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM
IDEAL -->	PII 400, 64MB RAM, 8X CD-ROM

Delta Force

Make the world a safer place in Voxel Space

MULTIPLAYER

ACCELE-RATED

All of your 3D hardware power is going to sit unused, cuz *Delta Force*'s voxel technology doesn't take advantage of it. You can easily set resolutions from 320 x 240 up to 800 x 600, but you'll need the ideal requirements to get the smooth panning of environments that precision-perfect head shots require.

It's a whole new ball game. The straight-up first-person shooter mold was broken by *Rainbow Six*, and hot on its heels comes *Delta Force*, the first action game from flight-sim veteran NovaLogic. Pitched into the role of a Delta Force operative, you are desperately needed in five trouble spots around the globe. Diplomatic threats of air strikes, economic sanctions, and strongly worded missives aren't going to work on drug cartels, terrorists, or tin pot countries holding the world to a nuclear ransom.

After selecting one of 12 available faces, you pick a campaign and get on with making the world a safer place through immense amounts of violence. The jungles of Peru are the probable starting location (though you can start in any region). Mission briefings take you through the waypoints, objectives, likely enemy threat, and the support on hand. You are the one-man (or woman) Bravo team in this organization. Two-man Alpha and Charlie teams are often used, but they have their own orders (usually to supply suppressing fire or support while you risk life and limb), and you don't get to plan their moves or instruct them during the operation.

Delta Force uses the "one hit and you're dead" method of ensuring your attention to mission briefings and stealth during operations. Movement is much freer than in *Rainbow Six* — you can crouch and run, and as soon as you stop, you can assume the crouch position again. You can even hit the deck prone (in fact, you need to in order to sneak up for a quick, quiet kill) as well as move and strafe. Stealth is often











Using a laser designator, you can call in artillery strikes on large targets in this night mission (hence the green).

Delta Force is stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Allegedly



You can also play in third person, but that's reserved for wusses.





Just to prove ... smoking kills.



key to mission success. Disappointing, though, is the knife throat cut — enemies drop silently, with no spewing blood from slit arteries. It's a shame.

Selecting the loadout for each mission can be key. While there are plenty of real-world, high-caliber sniper rifles (Barrett Light .50 and M40A1), the standard M4 with M203 grenade launcher will quickly become your friend. Its four times sniper scope is effective enough, especially when all Delta Force operatives carry binoculars for much greater viewing distances. Sidearms include the very useful silenced .22 pistol (not to be used at distances over about 30 meters), and secondary weapons include satchel charges.

NovaLogic's Voxel Space 3 engine gets its first airing. Yes, it's voxels, so there's a strong pixelated look, but it does let you see for miles, and through a scope, picking off bad guys from 400 meters away is a joy that can't be touched. Admittedly, at that distance, the enemies look like a cluster of small pixels, but you still see them twist and drop as they die. And while the precision shooting doesn't quite seem to match that of *Rainbow Six*, careful ballistics modeling adds to the realism. Some of the animation close-up is so excellent that you *almost* forget about the voxel uglifying.

Level design utilizes the rolling contours to great effect. Unfortunately the mission objectives become a little repetitive. There are too many laptop computers to retrieve and too many SAM sites to destroy before heading to the extraction point.

Enemies have a decent AI (for example, shoot one and the buddy is likely to hit the deck or run for cover). Also, enemies will move to flank you if you're spotted, or pin you down while others move in for the kill. The impact is surprisingly effective, especially when the bullets fizz around and kick up dirt as they pound inches from your nose. A great option is to show bullets' tracers. Not entirely realistic, it's vital for finding out who's shooting at you in the massively expansive mission areas.

Playing any of the 40 single-player missions cooperatively (with up to eight players over a LAN) is great. NovaWorld supports 30 players in a game, fighting straight deathmatch (pretty pointless) or team deathmatch, king of the hill, and capture the flag scenarios. The open spaces of the level don't really lead to the same kind of close quarters tension that oozes from the *Rainbow Six* multiplayer, but the larger-scale battles and greater flexibility of tactics are still great assets.

Different tactics (stealthy waypoint hitting or Rambo-esque charging) all add solid replay value to the fairly linear mission approach (fail one and you just have to do it again). As more people come online, we hope that the 30-player team games on NovaWorld live up to their billing. As it stands, if you can get over the voxel ugliness up close, *Delta Force* is tremendous fun and a great challenge.

— ROB SMITH *reckons that the SAS would kick Delta Force's ass.*

DELTA HOUSE

Delta House knockabies would surely have won medals in *Delta Force*.



JOHN BELUSHI
NAME— Bluto
MEDAL— Drunken Debauchery in Battle



KEVIN BACON
NAME— Chip Diller
MEDAL— Memorable discharge after shooting himself in the foot while dancing



MARK METCALF
NAME— Wieder meyer
MEDAL— None. We can't beat him being shot by friendly fire



OTIS DAY
NAME— Otis Day
MEDAL— Grammy and MTV Music Video Lifetime Achievement in Bad Frat Films Award

GRAPHICS

People look great, but the pixelated voxels up close are disappointing.

SOUND

Using 3D surround, it's important to listen for enemy fire.

DEPTH

Forty missions are a real challenge, but the premise is fairly shallow.

DESIGN

Solid AI and concept are hindered by repetitive mission objectives.

RATING 8

Pluses

→ Stealthy gameplay
→ You can see for miles and miles
→ Multiplayer options

Minuses

→ The voxels look ugly
→ Too many missions with too few ideas

For $28.95, you can own Bluto's official *Animal House* sweatshirt. Puke stains not included



© 1998 Square Co., Ltd. All rights reserved. Final Fantasy and Square Soft are registered trademarks of Square Co., Ltd. FF VII, DAIKATANA, HITO NO KANOTO, SUPERFLY JOHNSON and MIKIKO EBIHARA names and logos are trademarks of Ion Storm, L.P. All rights reserved. © 1998 Ion Storm, L.P. Thief: The Dark Project is a trademark of Looking Glass Studios. © 1998 Looking Glass Studios. Tomb Raider III and Lara Croft are trademarks of Core Design. © 1997-1998 Core. Eidos Interactive, Commandos and Revenant are trademarks of Eidos, Plc. © 1997-1998 Eidos. All rights reserved.

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 25

DEVELOPER → Micro Forte
PUBLISHER → Fliscord
REQUIRED → P120, 16MB RAM, 150MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM
IDEAL → P166, 32MB RAM, 8X CD-ROM, 16-bit sound card

Enemy Infestation

AKA *Paranoid Sci-Fi Bug Hunt*

ACCELE-RATED

Enemy Infestation is jam-packed with little details: little colonists, little household objects, and, of course, little aliens. Sometimes it's hard to discern just what's what, but the game doesn't require a 3D card, so you cheapos are in luck.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH?

THE AWFUL GREEN THINGS FROM OUTER SPACE
PREMISE → Alien nasties, mouth stages, randomized weapon effects
SAMPLE WEAPON EFFECTS → Shrink, grow, kill, fragment
SAMPLE ITEMS → Exterminator, kitchen knife, welding torch, comm beacon
HAPLESS YEOMAN → Spunk

ENEMY INFESTATION
PREMISE → Alien nasties, mouth stages, randomized weapon effects
SAMPLE WEAPON EFFECTS → Shrink, grow, kill, multiply
SAMPLE ITEMS → Extinguisher, crowbar, laser torch, remote control
STORY INTRO "AUTHOR" → T. Spunk





Um ... the game looks like this, but bigger.

Some might think it inappropriate to begin a review by talking about another game. Tough. *The Awful Green Things From Outer Spoce* was a charming little map-and-bits-of-paper game that first appeared in *Drogon Magazine* and later became a boxed game in its own right. It told the frantic (if rather goofy) tale of the starship Znutar and its beleaguered crew. Weapon effects were randomized from game to game — you never knew what the hell a given implement was gonna do until the first time you used it. Sometimes the one shot was all you got, particularly if you nuked a roomful of bad-egg E.T.s with an area-effect weapon that fragmented each alien into several smaller ones. Oops.

Enemy Infestation has taken a similar track, although it's not played for laughs. What you've got here is a very *Diablo*-esque, isometric, extremely detailed planetary colony, populated with soldiers, biologists, robots, medical personnel, and more, each with his or her own personality — photo, gameplay stats, audio lines, accent, attitude, the works. They're cheesy, but by god, they're unique, and you'll start getting attached to the little buggers.

As you click and send your roster about the base in real time, you'll need to pick up and experiment with everyday objects like fire extinguishers, hair spray, and TV remote controls. There are even some actual guns, both single-target and area-effect — if your weapon of choice shrinks, routs, or kills aliens, good for you; if it makes 'em grow or multiply, drop it fast and don't use it again.

In essence, *Enemy Infestation* is a big-ass *Bug Hunt* in the vein of the *Alien* trilogy (or an average episode of "MacGyver"). Different personnel types can utilize an impressive array of equipment — not just guns, but medical bays (for fixing people), computer banks (for learning new skills), rechargers (for reloading certain finite-use items), enviro-suits (for walking outside the colony), and labs (for researching alien physiologies and upgrading weapons). We are officially bummed that the use of women's underwear was not included.



We don't need no stinkin' training. If the point is to experiment with stuff, then it seems obvious that you should grab whatever you can, point at the alien, and shoot.

Graphics take on a Catch-22 quality here: The environments here are so detailed that it's often hard to tell where the goodies are, or if the goodies are aliens waiting to eat you. Call it a mood bonus. The interface, while complicated, is very helpful, bringing up names of items and persons as well as recorded weapon effects and all communications to date. There's even a fairly comprehensive online tutorial, a facet missing from too many games today.

Enemy Infestation gets the claustrophobic one-for-all-or-we're-all-gonna-die feel of the classic *Poronoid Sci-Fi Bug Hunt*, and even its cooperative-only multiplayer mode urges players to make the best creative use of the materials at hand. Shoot first and ask questions later ... but test the weapon on a small, single alien first or pay a hefty price.

— CHRIS HUDAK *tests the effectiveness of hoir sproy on oliens every morning.*

GRAPHICS
Crisp and extraordinarily detailed — perhaps too detailed.

SOUND
Aliens: loud and freaky. Colonist voices: earnest, but unique so you feel bad when they die.

DEPTH
For those willing to take the time, very layered gameplay.

DESIGN
Evidently not original, but there's the potential for fun moments.

RATING 7

Pluses
- → Distinct colonist personalities
- → Random weapon effects
- → Reasonably good online tutorial

Minuses
- → Difficult to see detail
- → Mechanics cannot fix robots until they're completely totaled
- → Opening movie voiceover is cheesy-scary-bad

DEVELOPER -->	MicroProse
PUBLISHER -->	MicroProse
REQUIRED -->	P133 (with 3D card), 32MB RAM, 330MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM
IDEAL -->	PII 400, 64MB RAM, 8X CD-ROM

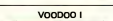
Klingon Honor Guard

It's a good day to license *Unreal*

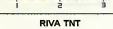
ACCELE-RATED

An *Unreal* engine game in its most raw sense, *KHG* really needs a beefy 3Dfx card to handle all those lovely colored, reflective, graphic effects. Voodoo 2 is, not surprisingly, the optimum option. A Direct3D patch is yet to be released, although, as for *Unreal* itself, it's likely to appear fairly soon.

VOODOO 2



VOODOO 1



RIVA TNT

NA

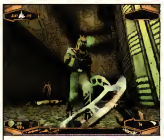
MATROX G200

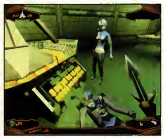
NA

API SUPPORT: Glide

So you've got the "Star Trek: The Next Generation" license. That's a very saleable thing. So you've got the *Unreal* engine. Likewise, a saleable property. You've got an audience wanting more *Unreal*-related gaming. You've got the time, while the code is being finalized by Epic, to come up with imaginative environments, weapon functions, and all those elements that make shooters great. And what do you do? You ship *Klingon Honor Guard*, an *Unreal* total conversion dressed in "Star Trek" clothing.

Klingons (aka walnut-heads), the fierce, honorable friends of the Federation, are the stars. As a raw recruit, starting life on the road to a glorious position on the vaulted Honor Guard, your training consists of instructors barking orders while you play out a simple scenario in the Holo-deck. Cue fade-in to story.





All the characters have a lot of detail in the shading and features. That's something, I s'pose.

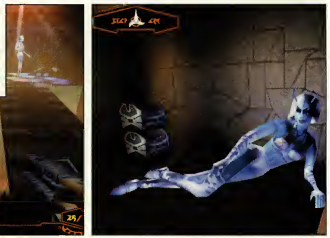
A terrorist attack on the Klingon High Council wipes out a bunch of high-ranking officials and guards, leaving boss Gowron in a critical condition. Evidently there are bad eggs in the Klingon basket, and who better to root out the miscreants than a raw recruit? So off you're sent, with the harsh tones of your boss (animated with superb precision) ringing in your ears.

Honor Guard's opportunity was to explore the Klingons' action culture. To this end, MicroProse put a strong emphasis on hand-to-hand combat, making your starting D'K Tahg knife one of the deadliest in the game. The Bat'Leth is even more deadly. But this is also a problem. Certainly until halfway through the 19 missions (playing on the second (human) level of the four difficulty options) it's quite possible to rampage, Bat'Leth in hand, in a one-man demolition slaughter-fest. Oh, it's fun for a while, but the novelty wears off waaaaay too fast.

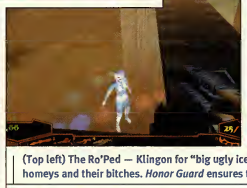
Other weapons like the Ding-Pach, which fires a disc that bounces off surfaces and returns to the weapon, try to instill a new twist, but also seem to lack any real substance. There's just no, well, ooomph. Even the secondary fire options fail to ignite enthusiasm (or the scenery).

Items such as combat goggles (basically a sniper scope) and a tricorder (spot enemies behind walls) are neat additions. Monster AI shows no major improvement on *Unreal* — Andorian captains will dodge a little and move quickly around you, but they prove to be more annoying than challenging (make sure you can circle strafe), as manic wailing with the Bat'Leth clears rooms faster than Mike without his clothes on. *[I find this onology to be weak, uneducated, and*

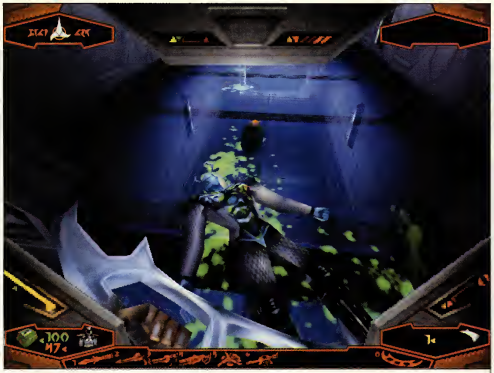








(Top left) The Ro'Ped — Klingon for "big ugly ice baboon." (Above) Get jiggy wit da Andorian homeys and their bitches. *Honor Guard* ensures that the oldest profession is also an alien one.

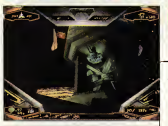


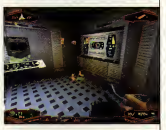
The Klingon version of O.J. surveys his handiwork.

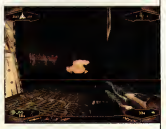




If only the single-player mode could create this kind of action.







The *Unreal* engine — so perty.

paintless — Mike] Even the good bits like the Tar Chop scurrying scorpion creatures are way too similar to *Unreal*'s Pupae, and the Ro'Ped rock-chucking ice creatures are evidently the bastard children of *Unreal*'s Titans and an especially stupid polar bear.

Ignoring the monotony of the find-switch/open-door mission routines (it *never* ends), the passageways of the various space stations, ships, and complexes are about as exciting as a date with Picard.

In cases like this, the multiplayer experience could be a savior. Epic is still working on that code, so you should just stick to botmatches. The action quotient is certainly high throughout the 12 deathmatch-specific maps (playing in teams, or any of the single-player maps in co-op). You can die incredibly swiftly though, at the hands of the rocket launcher, grenade lobber, and particle blaster — it does make for a very fast and very visceral experience.

I tried very hard to find elements in *Hanar Guard* worthy of excitement (multiplayer mode was certainly the best and the unsupported level editor with new textures is included). But once you're over the lens flare, colored lighting, and reflective surfaces, you're left with subdued, typical "Star Trek" music, and uninspired level design and mission structure. Even for "Star Trek" fans, sadly, there really isn't any meat to the Klingon story. And to think that this was better than *First Contact*, which got cancelled ...

— ROB SMITH *speaks Klingan, the language of luv, ta his girlfriend.*

HEAD TO HEAD



"OL's Rob Smith



"Star Trek"s Worf

For the record, Rob Smith objected to this photo because it makes him look terrifyingly similar to a Klingon.

LANGUAGE
KLINGONS—> Speak own dialect made up of grunt like noises
PCXL—> Speak own dialect made up of grunt like noises
WINNER—> Tie

PORN
KLINGONS—> In a "Next Generation" episode, Warf nailed porn actress Deanna Troi
PCXL—> They all like it — a lot
WINNER—> Klingons

EDUCATION
KLINGONS—> Have own college; Klingon Language Institute
PCXL—> Went to college, but mainly for beer and babes
WINNER—> PCXL

DRINKING
KLINGONS—> Constantly chug Romulan ale
PCXL—> Will chug anything with the word ale on it
WINNER—> Tie

VERDICT
The similarities between the primitive Klingons and cavemanlike PCXL staffers is astounding, but in the end PCXL wins because, well because we wrote the damn thing and we hate losing, so there.

GRAPHICS

All the great features of the *Unreal* engine are used to good effect.

SOUND

Subdued music, weak Klingon comments.

DEPTH

It's long and has a story that follows through, but it won't keep you hooked.

DESIGN

The biggest failing. Lacks imagination — are licensors Paramount to blame?

RATING 5

Pluses

- Great *Unreal*-engine graphics
- Detailed mission intro animation
- Spewing fluorescent blood

Minuses

- Painfully uninspired levels
- Painfully uninspired weapons
- Painfully uninspired monsters

Both the Bible and Shakespeare are being translated into Klingon — check www.kli.org

DEVELOPER -->	Ensemble Studios
PUBLISHER -->	Microsoft
REQUIRES -->	P90, 16MB RAM, 30MB hard drive, 2X CD-ROM, SVGA graphics, Sound Blaster compatible sound card, *Age of Empires* (full version)
IDEAL -->	P200+, 32MB RAM, 48MB hard drive, 8X CD-ROM, 28.8Kbps

Age of Empires: The Rise of Rome

Welcome back to that 3 a.m. "just one more mission" phenomenon

MULTIPLAYER

ACCELE-RATED

The real rise and fall of Rome didn't need a 3D card, so why should this game? Because it would look better, but that is beside the point. This is likely the last batch of RTS games that won't feature 3D support, so enjoy your software-only versions while you can and get a 3D card before it is too late (see TechPhiles for advice on which one to get).

FASCINATING FACT

When **Julius Caesar** was a young soldier (roughly 80 B.C.), he was captured by pirates in the Eastern Mediterranean. When the thieves demanded 20 talents of gold for his life, he said, "What! Only 20 talents? I will give you 50 talents for my life!" Caesar was kept as a prisoner while two messengers were sent to Miletus for the ransom money. During this time, he joked with the pirates and vowed to hang them all someday. Caesar's abductors were extremely amused at his optimism, and sure enough, within a few weeks the entire pirate band was captured and assassinated back in Rome ...



See, Rome *can* be built in a day (destroyed too).

Love 'em or loathe 'em, it's hard to dispute that Microsoft released one helluva game last year. Though it had some serious problems with AI and balancing, *Age of Empires* was a challenging, immersive, and unique experience. Cunningly timed for the holidays, *Rise of Rome* addresses a bunch of *AoE*'s problem areas enough to ensure satisfaction among anyone who enjoyed the original.

Four new civilizations — the Romans, the Carthaginians, the Macedonians, and the Palmyrans — join the 12 from the original game. Of course, each race has its own unique abilities and weaknesses, and all are well-balanced. In addition, a number of tweaks were made to the original 12 civs. For something a little more daring, there's also a new random civilization option, so you won't know which civilization you're playing until the game starts.

Of course, there are extra units, including the Slinger, a nasty little warrior who can take on multiple bowmen or even chariot archers (with upgrades). Meanwhile, Camel Riders (notice we didn't call them Camel Jockeys. See how politically correct we can be?) are designed to give cavalry a good fight.

Naturally, there are new technologies to research as well, including medicine, tower shield, martyrdom, and logistics. Similar to *Populous 3*, martyrdom allows priests to convert any enemy unit (except other priests) by sacrificing themselves after the act. Alternatively, there's a neat cheat code called Finger of God, in which a priest summons a lightning bolt out of the heavens to kill an opponent (something that would be quite useful in real life).

The four new civs bring with them the attendant new buildings (e.g., the Roman Coliseum), campaigns, the editor features, larger maps with more diverse locations, and a handful of user-friendly options. Production queuing is now available (finally), and double-clicking a unit will select all of the same units on the screen, making control much tighter.

Eight players can still duke it out over a LAN or for free on www.zone.com. This time around, chatting is set to Allied right from the get-go, and allied town centers are automatically visible as well. Also, as a result of considerable gamer feedback, there is now an in-game option to change the population limit.

To be perfectly honest, it's hard to find fault in this *AoE* expansion pack. And hey, it's only $24.95 with the mail-in rebate. All in all, *Rise of Rome* is an exemplary investment for *AoE* players, and its all-out approach should set a precedent for future add-on packs in the gaming industry. Congrats to the team at Ensemble for outdoing themselves ... for the second time.

— MARC SALTZMAN *looks snazzy in a toga, but wos kicked aff the set of* Animal House *for picking on Kevin Bacon.*



How many magazine captions will include the line, "What have the Romans done for us?" (We already know of two.)



How can you make a game about Romans without orgies?

GRAPHICS

Crisp SVGA graphics and smooth animation, but no better than the original.

SOUND

As solid as its predecessor with extra tracks and some new unit sounds.

DEPTH

Adds even more substance to *AoE* without overcomplicating the process.

DESIGN

A challenging historical sim with tons of replayability.

RATING 8

Pluses

- Well-balanced gameplay and user-friendly options
- New civs are just plain cool

Minuses

- Minor pathfinding problems
- New scenarios are very tough
- Unit formations would've been nice

Your TEAM is dug in 5 miles west of the extraction point.
The enemy is slowly surrounding you.

You're down to your last few rounds - cold, dog-tired, wounded.
The only easy day was yesterday.

FREE* LARGE-SCALE MULTI-PLAY over 30 PLAYER'S Per Game via NovaWorld servers

DELTA FORCE™

Welcome to Hell, ladies



Motion capture technology brings characters to life



A complete arsenal of weapons to choose from



Engage the enemy over unprecedented distances

- Play in either 1st or 3rd person across miles & miles of outdoor environments
- Over 40 gut-wrenching missions
- Premiering Voxel Space® 3 graphics terrain with 32-bit color
- Missions developed with the assistance of a former U.S. Army Delta Force Officer

Go to http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411: Product Number 36

NOVALOGIC - THE ART OF WAR™

FREE* LARGE SCALE MULTI-PLAY NOW PLAYING ON novaworld.net

www.novalogic.com 800.858.1322

© 1998 NovaLogic, Inc. Voxel Space and NovaLogic are registered trademarks and Delta Force, NovaWorld and The Art of War are trademarks of NovaLogic, Inc. *Internet service required. Player responsible for all applicable airtime fees. NovaLogic reserves the right to change the terms of service at any time.

DEVELOPER --› Monolith
PUBLISHER --› Monolith
REQUIRED --› P166, 32MB RAM, 3Dfx or Direct3D compatible card (P233 required for software)
IDEAL --› PII 400, 128MB RAM, Riva TNT

Shogo: Mobile Armor Division

How do you say "blow shit up" in Japanese?

MULTIPLAYER

ACCELE-RATED

If you have a 3Dfx card, Monolith recommends downloading the reference drivers since most card manufacturers' drivers aren't fully DirectX 6 compatible. This is annoying, but is just a temporary fix. Because of this, we give the nod to the superior rendering quality of the TNT.

VOODOO 2
VOODOO 1
RIVA TNT
MATROX G200

API SUPPORT: DirectX 6

A brief history of *Shogo*: Yeah, so Monolith, the maker of *Blood* (shudder), has an anime-inspired shooter in the works. What's it called again? *Shogo*? That's not a name people remember; it'll never catch on ... wait a second, what is that? Damn, that looks cool ... this is *Shogo*, huh? Shee-it!

The thing is, when you first see it, there isn't any single thing about this game that really stands out. The graphics are definitely eye-candi-fied, with sharp high-res textures and rich 16-bit color — excellent lighting model, too, with subtle and convincing shadows. The level design has a definite real-world influence, with both outdoor and indoor levels. The weapons — OK wait, maybe there is something that stands out. The point is, even though the indi-vidual elements may not be the best you've ever seen, they fit together extremely well to form a superior first-person shooter.

To illustrate this, let's get back to the weapons, because without a doubt, *Shogo*'s got some of the most ass-kicking weapons ever seen in a first-person shooter. Two separate arsenals, nine weapons each, to start with, because the game is played half on foot and half in a giant robot known as an MCA. On foot you've got your dual Colts for two-fisted John Woo action, an assault rifle with built-in sniper mode, two grenade launchers, and a *Duke*-style rocket launcher among others. MCAs pack the multiple-rocket-firing bullgut, single-rocket-firing juggernaut, and a grenade launcher called the spider that is great for taking care of bosses in a hurry. When you first fire off the bullgut and send four spiraling rockets of death at a group of






The mechs go boom, the humans go splat, many of both die.



Hey baby, wanna go shoot some polygons together?





With 18 weapons in all, there's almost too much killing to go around.



enemy MCAs, destroying them all in a gigantic series of explosions, you can't help but cackle with glee.

As interesting and satisfying as it is to blow stuff up all day, these weapons wouldn't be half as fun if the game wasn't so immersive otherwise. It's heavy on atmosphere, and the levels are varied and numerous, and only mildly guilty of the old backtracking-through-levels-to-extend-the-length-of-the-game trick. The missions are pretty much find the exit types, but are presented in interesting ways so they aren't boring. Fighting alongside teammates is a cool addition as well, though you do that only on a few missions.

This goes hand in hand with the plot, which makes less sense than Ronald Reagan when he forgets to take his medication. As Sanjuro, your mission is to assassinate a leader of a fanatic group up to no good, while at the same time trying to explain to your girlfriend why you're once again dating her sister (doh!). I thought she was dead, I swear! Monolith made a concerted effort to build up characters, as well as preserve a sort of anime sensibility. The typical briefing makes absolutely zero sense, but sensible level design compensates for that, so it's pretty easy to work out what you're supposed to be doing. Also, the frequent in-level communications keep things moving along.

Again, Monolith deserves mad props for the LithTech engine, which is thoroughly impressive and squishes early skepticism. However, here lies my only real problem with the game — compatibility issues. Perhaps my computer is just Monolith-incompatible (see October's *Get Medieval* review), but I encountered frequent crashes at the hands of berserk 3D card drivers that just wouldn't keep the game running for long. This eventually caused me to switch to my primary display driver (Rendition v2200 — blah) to finish the game. But the fact that LithTech is brand spankin' new makes these kinds of problems sadly inevitable, though Monolith is sure to be addressing this kind of stuff with a patch that is likely already available (we hope).

One more paragraph about multiplayer: It rocks. Although only straight deathmatch is supported outta the box (up to 16 players, Internet/LAN), I was mightily impressed by how fast and furious it plays, especially the MCA levels with people switching in and out of vehicle mode and cutting loose with bullguts in frenzied battles. On-foot levels are chock full of one-shot kills, and let me say that the squeak toy "weapon" is PCXL's new pinnacle of deathmatch taunting.

So who cares if it's slightly slower than *Quake II* with slightly less visual wow than *Unreal*? It's got that intangible fun factor that makes you want to keep playing (I made it through the entire game, on deadline, without cheating). It's hard to imagine PCXL readers not having a similar blast.

— ED LEE *is still trying to license the FRAG engine. Sa far, no takers.*

SISTER ACT

THE BARBI TWINS:
TWIN A, TWIN B
THE ONE WE'D MOST LIKE TO DATE: → Twin A is obviously much better looking

THE JUDDS:
WYNONA, ASHLEY
THE ONE WE'D MOST LIKE TO DATE: → Well duh, Wynona! She's a whole lotta woman



Eh. Barbi Twins

THE TAYLORS: NIKI, KRISSY
THE ONE WE'D MOST LIKE TO DATE: → Niki, because being alive is a definite plus

THE BRADYS:
MARSHA, JAN, CINDY
THE ONE WE'D MOST LIKE TO DATE: → Ooh, Marsha (but the best-looking one today is Cindy)

THE OLSENS:
MARY-KATE AND ASHLEY
THE ONE WE'D MOST LIKE TO DATE: → Uh, we'll stay away from this one.

GRAPHICS

High-res textures, excellent lighting model, and 16-bit color.

SOUND

Anime inspired, atmospheric, and over-the-top.

DEPTH

Forty single-player levels and two different play styles.

DESIGN

- It's got miles and miles of style — its anime inspiration was a great narrow focus.

RATING 8

Pluses

- → Weapons pack a punch
- → Great engine
- → Challenging single-player game

Minuses

- → Compatibility issues
- → Hefty system requirements
- → J-pop opening song

Apologies to the Beastie Boys, whose lyrics we've stolen two months in a row

DEVELOPER --> Rogue Entertainment
PUBLISHER --> Activision
REQUIRED --> P90, 16MB RAM, 150MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM, Sound Blaster compatible card, QII
IDEAL --> PII 400, 128MB RAM, Voodoo 2 SLI, cable modem

Quake II: Ground Zero

This *Quake II* game's not half bad, is it?

MULTIPLAYER

ACCELE-RATED

Quake II supports OpenGL only, which means card performance will vary according to how well the company's drivers run under OpenGL. Right now, Glide's OpenGL runs great, but so do cards like the TNT with its additional texture memory.

VOODOO 2
1 2 3

VOODOO 1
1 2 3

RIVA TNT
1 2 3

MATROX G200
1 2 3

API SUPPORT: OpenGL

NEW ARSENAL

ETF RIFLE
An armor-piercing variant of the hyperblaster. Similar fire rate, but projectiles travel much slower — therefore, it's best used at short/medium range. Has its own ammo type.



PLASMA BEAM
This one we like. A steady stream of laser death. Think of it as a hyperblaster without the spin-down time. Uses energy cells.



CHAINFIST
Aww yeah, it's back and deadlier than ever. However, presentation is kinda crappy, it sounds more like an automatic can opener than a rip-roaring death dealer.



PROX MINES
These deathmatch favorites are back, and can be thrown, or better yet launched with the grap launcher. Same principle: Attach to surfaces on contact, explode when anyone approaches. Score kills from across the level.



Now, I consider myself a pretty good *Quake II*er (even if I'm a little rusty on single player), but this add-on pack is hard. I was waxed by ambushes often and with extreme prejudice. *Graund Zero* starts out tough — the third monster you run into is the grenade-lobbing Gunner — and just pours on the assaults and the pressure until you make it to the end of the, um, plot, which in true *Quake* tradition is some incomprehensible "blow up the thingamajig" deal.

Fourteen single-player maps take you through the whole slew of *Quake II* moments you've come to love. The old pull-the-switch/backtrack/kill-more-monsters routine isn't quite as frequent as in *The Reckaning*, but is still prevalent. Level design, which was a highlight of Rogue's *Scaurge of Armagan* pack, is somewhat disappointing. The developers really don't attempt anything new or innovative here — their biggest achievement is tasteful and frequent use of colored lighting, which looks almost out of place among the browns and greens that are *Quake II*'s visual trademark.

The 10 new deathmatch maps are well put together, but have the same problem that *The Reckaning*'s DM maps did: They're just too damn big! You could have a monster truck rally in some of them; playing with four to six other people usually means running around for minutes before finding anybody. However, in addition to the new weapons (see sidebar) several new power-ups enhance the experience. One of these is the vengeance sphere, which follows you around and when you get killed immediately tracks down your killer and explodes. The new double damage power-up can be used cumulatively with quad damage — ahhh, octuple-damage chain gun — and the anti-matter bomb will clear out major chunks of levels with its all-reaching blast. You'll think you've run far enough away before that thing goes, but one blast of white light and intense pain later, you'll be like, "what the hell?" God, I hate room-clearing weapons like the BFG, but the anti-matter bomb builds a great sense of suspense.

Rogue knew that pretty much only hardcore *Quake II* fans would buy this level pack, and played up to that by giving 'em nice multiplayer additions as well as a tough-as-nails single-player experience. It's a noble cause, and one that saves this pack from falling by the wayside.

— ED LEE *still thinks* QII *deathmatch is the best.*





John Woo–type standoffs are much easier in god mode.



The chainfist takes out regular grunts with just one whack.

GRAPHICS
It's *Quake II*, nothing you haven't seen before. Yes, it's still brown and green.

SOUND
Same old, same old. Once again, it's *Quake II*.

DEPTH
Fourteen new levels and four new weapons ain't bad, and there's a high degree of difficulty.

DESIGN
Level design seems to be concerned with perfecting the *Quake II* style rather than trying anything new.

RATING 7

Pluses
- Challenging
- New weapons and power-ups
- Rock-solid multiplayer

Minuses
- Uninspired level design
- Monster AI is still pretty dumb
- Deathmatch levels still way too big

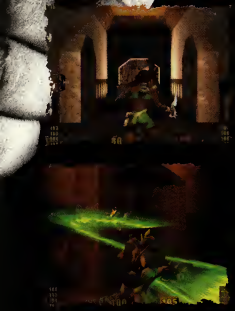
Anywhere from ground zero to ground 10 is a very bad place to be during an explosion. P/ ACCELERATOR · Describe · SUCK

http://pcgn.com

vengeance will be yours.

A bold new odyssey of combat and exploration







In a **dazzling 3D** world that dwarfs everything except your burning hatred, you must master **3 radically different styles** of combat. Along **3 unique paths.** And reap retribution in **32-player deathmatches.** Immersed in **incredible lighting** and **particle fx.** You have 3 golden chances to make the bastards pay. Treasure them.

DARK VENGEANCE

www.dark-vengeance.com

Available at your local retail store
Order direct at store.gtinteractive.com or call 1-800-610-GTIS.

NEED A HINT?
1-900-CALL-2GT

GT Interactive Software

www.gtinteractive.com

Dark Vengeance(TM) (C)1998 Reality Bytes, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Created by Reality Bytes, Inc. Published and distributed by GT Interactive Software Corp. GT and the GT Games Logo are trademarks and the GT Logo is a registered trademark of GT Interactive Software Corp. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies.

DEVELOPER →	Red Storm
PUBLISHER →	Red Storm
REQUIRED →	P166 without acceleration, P200 with D3D card, 16MB RAM, 100MB hard drive *(Note: These reqs are a joke — use the ideal reqs)*
IDEAL →	PII 333, 64MB RAM, Voodoo 2, extreme suckttitude resistance

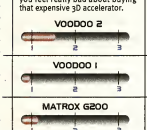
Dominant Species

SUICIDE

What the hell happened here?

ACCELE-RATED

The game is almost unplayable in software mode due to slow-ass framerates (even on a PII 300 with a TNT), so you better have D3D support. Special effects aren't much. Overall this will just make you feel really bad about buying that expensive 3D accelerator.



API SUPPORT: Direct3D

SOPHOMORE SLUMP

Dominant Species isn't the only time an outstanding effort (*Rainbow Six*) has been followed by an awful one.


Krissy Taylor

KRISSY TAYLOR FOLLOWED→ Niki Taylor.
MAIN SHORTCOMING→ She's dead.
WHO'S TO BLAME→ The cruel world, which forced her into a lucrative modeling career. Apparently the pressure of looking pretty was just too much

JAWS 2 FOLLOWED→ *Jaws*
MAIN SHORTCOMING→ How do you get the shark to look worse in the sequel?
WHO'S TO BLAME→ Marketers cashing in on the success of the original

CHUBBY ALICIA SILVERSTONE FOLLOWED→ Thin Alicia Silverstone
MAIN SHORTCOMING→ After she made it big, she really made it big
WHO'S TO BLAME→ Herself, for becoming a cow just when she was due to grow into sex symbol status

FRENCH TOAST CRUNCH FOLLOWED→ Cinnamon Toast Crunch
MAIN SHORTCOMING→ It tastes terrible, sorta like Cookie Crisp without the chocolatey goodness
WHO'S TO BLAME→ Nabisco, for thinking that taking sugar out of a cereal would be a good thing

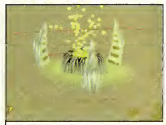
Warning sign that *Dominant Species* is a bomb: Red Storm didn't send it out to reviewers before it shipped. Movie studios do this too, and whenever they do it's a clear sign that the movie sucks. In the case of *Batman and Robin* and *The Avengers*, that assumption proved to be completely true. And sadly, it's also true for Red Storm's bizarrely populated new realtime strategy game.

There is one thing that stands out and clearly illustrates what is wrong with the game. In every single RTS game ever made, since the map you have to play on is much larger than the viewable area on your screen, you need to be able to scroll the screen in all directions. And in every single RTS game ever made, it's easiest to do this by simply moving the cursor to the edges. Oh, but not in *Dominant Species*. That's not good enough for them — instead you have to use the arrow keys to move around the map. Forget streamlined, intuitive interfaces. Red Storm forces you to jump through hoops to play the game the way they want you to play, not the way you've learned — which would be fine if it made the game more fun, but it doesn't.

That aside, what else is going on here? Well, *Dominant Species* puts you in control of an alien race with all animal-like units, both land and air, and in a twist, a bunch of rampaging humans are the enemy. In traditional RTS fashion, you collect resources (three different kinds of something called "anima"), build troops, and attack. The tech tree only includes eight buildings: your hive, three types of resource collectors, three types of defensive structures, and a barracks. There are plenty of units and it's a nice touch that they can grow in size and strength. However, just when you think you're starting to get past the clumsy interface and get into the game, something else happens to ruin your fun. It could be the crappy AI that has your troops running around like idiots while you attempt to maintain the barest semblance of control. Then there's the fact that you can view any part of the map simply by moving the camera over it, which pretty much negates the fog of war and any kind of suspense with it. The fact that one puny enemy can take out your hive while your troops stand by and watch is ridiculous as well.

So the question is, what the hell happened, Red Storm? I guess we'll attribute this to sophomore slump and try to forget this whole thing as soon as possible. *Rainbow Six* is good enough to make us forget, once!


Umm ... this game is just freaky to look at and play.


Mmmm, Jiffy Pop. This game made us hungry and bored.


The only thing that could save this game is a multiplayer hookup with *Rainbow Six*. An M-16 should do the trick nicely.

— **ED LEE** *says, "I want back the time I put into playing this game!"*

GRAPHICS
Supports hardware, but color depth and overall look is bland.

SOUND
Doesn't grate on the nerves, unlike the rest of the game.

DEPTH
You won't want to play it long enough to find out.

DESIGN
Somewhere along the line, it all went bad.

RATING 2

Pluses
→ Graphics are passable
→ Desperately tries to innovate
→ One-click uninstall

Minuses
→ Perverse camera interface
→ Painfully not fun
→ AI = "Ass Intelligence"

DEVELOPER →	Beam Software
PUBLISHER →	GT Interactive
REQUIRED →	P166 (P200 without a 3D card), 16MB RAM, 50MB hard drive, 6X CD-ROM
IDEAL →	PII 300, 32MB RAM, 150MB hard drive, Voodoo 2

Dethkarz

Vehicular homicide takes the high-end road

GAMEPAD

ACCELE-RATED

Arcade racers and 3D accelerators are a match made in heaven. Want to show your friends how cool your new 3D card is? Well, *Dethkarz* is an ideal showcase. The blinding framerates and unbelievable details are brilliant on any 3D card. However, the TNT and Voodoo 2 deliver the most eye-candified visuals of the bunch, plus framerates near 60 fps.

VOODOO 2

VOODOO 1

MATROX G200

RIVA TNT

API SUPPORT: Glide, PowerVR, D3D

PEOPLE ARE DUMB

In the spirit of bad taste, here's more "death," destruction, and stupidity taken from the Darwin Awards nominees.

FORT WORTH, TX — In December near Mineral Wells, TX, three men who were attempting to steal copper wire off live electrical lines for resale were electrocuted. Copper wiring is a valuable scrap metal in Texas, but is usually stolen from electric cables that are not being used.

SAN FRANCISCO — Terrible diet and a small room with no ventilation are being blamed for the death of a man who was killed by his own gas. An autopsy showed large amounts of methane gas in his system. His diet had consisted pri-marily of beans and cabbage.

TORONTO — Police said a lawyer demonstrating the safety of windows in a downtown Toronto skyscraper crashed through a pane with his shoulder and plunged 24 floors to his death. Gary Hoy, 35, fell into the courtyard of the Toronto Dominion Bank Tower early Friday evening. He was explaining the strength of the building's windows, Peter Lauwers, managing partner of the firm Holden Day Wilson, said that Hoy was "one of the best and brightest" members of the 200-man association.

Since there's always room for just one more arcade-style racer, we give you the Australian-built, sci-fi-themed *Dethkarz*, and it's quite a sight to behold. *Dethkarz* was built for the speed-addicted special-effects junkie. Think of it as the next generation of *Pod* or (shudder) *Megarace* — there are guns, power-ups, and whacked-out futuristic landscapes to race over in cars that still use tires and look like oddly British versions of muscle cars that had some sort of freaky bastard inanimate lovechild with art deco furniture.

Dethkarz is blatantly influenced by coin-op and console racers like *Wipeout* and *Super GT*, and the look hits its target right on the nose. The reflective surfaces, chrome, transparencies, flashy billboards, and funky lights all add up to a 3D-accelerated orgy. The four locations (each with three track selections — short, medium, and long) sport impressively wide-open vistas, sheer drops, towering peaks, and are enough to make the coin-op racing masters at Sega shake their heads in wonder.

There are four types of cars with three variations therein, accessible as you progress through the championship mode. Access to the later tracks is granted in the same manner, though the new course layouts are just different routes on the same track. Sound effects are properly vroomy and impressive, but the overuse of mediocre English-techno in these racing games is starting to become as commonplace as the well-dressed gay guy with a heart of gold on nearly every sitcom.



Winding tracks, luscious graphics, high speed, and free sex. Three out of four ain't bad, right?

Racing games are all about physics, and here *Dethkarz* is generally successful. All the cars feel different, though some are a bit too unwieldy on the track. The game accounts for a lot of variables that affect performance, but the problem is that getting the control to feel just right is more work than it should be. Tweaking the controller's deadzone, switching between pad and stick, and going from car to car to find the perfect mating for optimum control styles is just too much work. Thankfully, you can turn off the weapons — a welcome option, since avoiding gunfire just seems extraneous. Admittedly, some of the power-up effects are extremely keen, but the game is best at its core level of pure racing.

Dethkarz is definitely one of the better action racers to come down the pike, even if it's not quite all there in terms of its feel. Still, it's a fast and gorgeous ride.

— JASON D'APRILE *is considered a deathtrap behind the wheel, but is even more onnoying to tolk to.*

GRAPHICS

Runs the eye-candy gamut for keen visuals. Another 3D card special.

SOUND

Good sound effects, but the music is more like techno-muzak.

DEPTH

Just passable variety is made up for with dead-on gameplay.

DESIGN

Steals all the good bits from classic racing games. This is good.

RATING 8

Pluses

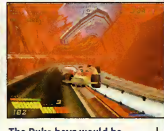
→ Great graphics
→ Solid physics
→ Really fast

Minuses

→ Controls often feel a little off
→ Boring music
→ Could use more variety of locations



Dethkarz **looks just like *Wipeout* with tires.**



The Duke boys would be proud of jumps like this.



© 1998 Ubi Soft. All rights reserved. All other trademarks are the property of their respective holders.
© 1998 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. The 3Dfx Interactive logo is trademark of 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. in the USA and in other select countries. All rights reserved.


RADAR
ZONE
There are no
tow trucks on
the information
highway.
* Actual screenshots from the game
Speed
Busters
AMERICAN HIGHWAYS
www.speedbusters.com
Go to http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411 Product Number 58

DEVELOPER → Origin
PUBLISHER → Origin
REQUIRED → P166, 32MB RAM, 64MB hard drive, 2MB PCI or AGP video card, sound card, joystick
IDEAL → P200 MMX, 32MB RAM, 4MB PCI or AGP, Riva TNT

Wing Commander Prophecy: Secret Ops

Time to squash those bugs — again

ACCELE-RATED

With the possible exception of Interplay's *Descent: FreeSpace*, *Prophecy* was the finest example of hardware-supported space combat on the PC. *Secret Ops* does a good job of fleshing out explosions on all the cards. It's D3D support means TNT tops out Voodoo 2 in a close run.

VOODOO 2
VOODOO 1
RIVA TNT
MATROX G200
1 2 3

API SUPPORT: Direct3D



Cap ships still don't explode all the way — damn!

Just when you thought all those pesky space bugs were dead and it was safe to roam the universe again, they return in droves. And they're really pissed at you for kicking their asses in *Wing Commander Prophecy*. Don't you hate it when bugs hold grudges?

Secret Ops is a free (yes, you heard me right) follow-up to *Wing Commander: Prophecy*, Origin's flashiest *Wing Commander* game to date. *Secret Ops* is a stand-alone game, so you don't need *Prophecy* to play it, but you better hurry if you want to download it, as it won't be available for free forever (it was featured on the PCXL November CD-ROM). Origin plans to combine *Secret Ops* with *Wing Commander: Prophecy*, to result in the typical "Gold" version of *Prophecy*, which should be available when you read this (almost like magic).

Of course, *Secret Ops*' core 115MB "starter kit" takes some 11 hours to download over a 28.8 connection ... but it *was* featured on the PCXL November CD-ROM! After you've got the starter kit, you'll have to download each of the seven game episodes, which Origin posted on a weekly basis.

Is *Secret Ops* worth going through all the online trouble to get? Well, if you're a die-hard *Wing Commander* fan who's yearning for more of the same fly-to-the-next-waypoint-and-kill-everything-in-sight *Wing Commander* gameplay, the answer is a resounding yes. The 56 total missions hold more seat-of-your-pants dogfighting action than previous *Wing Commander* games, and the challenge is extreme on the higher difficulty settings.

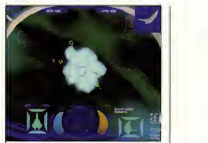
If you're looking for something new in a *Wing Commander* game, you'll likely be disappointed. *Secret Ops*' story is cliché (but one could argue that's in keeping with the *Wing Commander* tradition — bugs and a mysterious "other" race likely to appear from a far-flung corner) and the gameplay is repetitious. It's still largely you against the universe, and your wingmen are still largely useless. Plus, for most missions, you really don't even need to read the briefing — just hit "fly," go to each nav point, and kill everything you see.

That said, *Wing Commander* still supplies the visceral benchmark for sci-fi shooters (arguable, when compared to the effects in *FreeSpace*, which was a better all-around game, but perhaps not quite as graphically polished). The fighter and capital ship graphics are still amazing, as are the special effects. The gameplay may be repetitive, but it's amazing how it never really gets dull blowin' up the hordes of bugs you encounter. (However, you'll want to turn off the astoundingly lame in-cockpit pilot chatter. The same four or five lines are repeated endlessly by the same pilots and you'll often hear the same pilot announce he's ejecting many times in the same mission.)

Why's *Secret Ops* available for free? Not because it's rubbish. On the surface, Origin wants to reward *Wing Commander* fans for their loyalty over the years, but I say the game should have been named *Prophecy: The Nu Multiplayer Apology*. Making *Secret Ops* available for free is a nice gesture.

That said, if you can get *Wing Commander: Secret Ops* for free, it's a nice follow-up to a decent *Wing Commander* game. However, because of its been-there, done-that gameplay, only the most die-hard *Wing Commander* fans should consider shelling out for the Gold edition.

— **STEVE KLETT** *would rather fly secret ops in a P51 Mustang.*



Another bug goes up in smoke. You can pretty much guarantee that there are loads more right behind it.



Battles are bigger and more crowded than ever. More ships onscreen mean a greater power requirement.

GRAPHICS
Awesome alien ships, stellar explosions — all you could want from the visuals.

SOUND
Decent tunes, but annoying pilot chatter.

DEPTH
Too shallow to skip a stone across.

DESIGN
Classic *Wing Commander* gameplay — find the bugs, fly down, and shoot the bugs.

RATING 7

Pluses
→ Lots of missions
→ Challenging
→ It's free

Minuses
→ Too many similar missions
→ Lame story
→ No Ginger

DEVELOPER →	Buca Entertainment
PUBLISHER →	Monolith Productions
REQUIRED →	P200, 16MB RAM, 40MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM
IDEAL →	P233, 32MB RAM

Rage of Mages

Sturm und Drang, from Russia with love

ACCELE-RATED

Rages of Mages' graphics are powered through software, with no support for 3D cards. Unless of course there is some magic spell hidden deep within the game. But this is highly unlikely.

AGE OF RAGES

This is an age of rages. Other significant rages:

RAGE OF BEIGES
Universal compromise in search for computer colors that save the world from aquamarine, puce, cerise, polka-dot, and tartan desktop models

RAGE OF GAUGES
Argument over measurements that split the civilized world between ounces and grams, quarts and liters, yards and meters, centigrade and Fahrenheit, and, most heinous of all, paper or plastic

RAGE OF WAGES
Sinking feeling PC ACCELERATOR staffers get when they pick up their paychecks

RAGE OF PAGES
Deep anger felt by Stephen King, the world's wordiest writer, when he fails to submit a 27,000-page manuscript past his editors

RAGE OF PAGES 2
Lengthy 29,000-page Kenneth Starr report, which not only bested King at wordiness, but also at kinky sex, plot subtlety, and bizarre behavior

RAGE OF PAGES 3
Total ad suffered by White House pages over time blown reading Stephen King novels when they could have been studying Monica Lewinsky's proclivities toward executive service

... not to mention RAGES OF CAGES, SAGES, STAGES, and MUCILAGES



Monica's White House activities made short reading.

Monolith Productions, the company that brought us the anime-style *Shogo*, is also publishing an action-RPG from across the world. *Rage of Mages*, a mystical RPG full of storm and stress, comes from Russia, that wonderful country whose people gave us vodka and ... er, *Vangers*?

But *Rage of Mages* is no *Vangers*. You plunge into the world of Allod, playing as a young swordsman, a female warrior, a female mage, or a male sorcerer. Whoever you choose to be, an epic adventure awaits. The Kania Empire, exhausted by years of war, is now little more than a collection of ruined villages and frightened inhabitants, menaced by monsters. Your task is to find a magic weapon, but first you have to fight your way through more than 25 branching missions. (These are usually quite short, often lasting less than an hour.)

Like the better RPGs, characters grow nicely and improve with each battle. The graphics are good, too, though presented from a slightly old-school top-down perspective. Half the fun is getting rich, unearthing magic books, amulets, and more than 300 varieties of weapons and armor. Keep the best weapons for yourself and sell the others at the trading center. You need the money to hire mercenaries, buy advanced weapons such as bigger two-handed swords that carry more damage points, or just to sit around on your fat chain-mail-clad ass and be rich.



Villages are bleak, and often in ruins.



The training center in Plagat can increase your abilities.

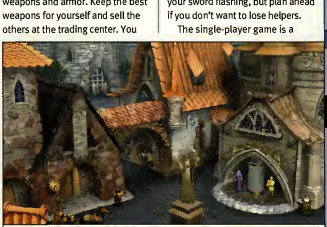
You can also improve your character's stats by spending bucks at the local fighting school. Each training session adds a point to your hero's total. You can buy special training for your companions, and you'll find help for hire from knights in armor, big bruisers with cudgels, and a team of Amazon archers. Most handle themselves quite well.

Character growth will keep you happily employed, but battles and strategy are the ultimate high. Throughout *Rage of Mages*, you cross swords with 50 imaginative monsters and enemies, from killer bees to giant Orcs and nasty flying creatures that can only be downed by arrows. Wade into battle with your sword flashing, but plan ahead if you don't want to lose helpers.

The single-player game is a pleasure, and multiplay is also a kick if you link up with friends. There are no lobby servers, but as many as 16 can play over a LAN. The multiplayer game has no quests, just cleaning monsters out of the maps, or fighting each other. You can also save your multiplayer hero for later games.

OK, so it's not vodka. But *Rage of Mages*, if you get hooked like I did, can be just as intoxicating.

— JOHN LEE *is PCXL's official Russian correspondent.*



The village of Plagat boasts an Inn where you can hire mercenaries, a trading center for weapons and armor, and a training facility to upgrade your abilities. The gate in the background sends you off on quests.

GRAPHICS

Dynamic lighting and ugly monsters in an old-school top-down perspective.

SOUND

Music is simple but adequate. Sounds of battle work well.

DEPTH

Loses replay value, but different heroes and tougher odds may help.

DESIGN

Dark images, ruined villages, and dead bodies give it a pleasantly creepy feel.

RATING 7

Pluses

→ Nice graphics and art
→ Developing hero adds gameplay
→ AI reacts to your experience and abilities as game progresses

Minuses

→ Uninspired perspective
→ Some missions are very short
→ Limited replay value

Magic is an archaic term for magician. David Copperfield is an archaic example.

DEVELOPER -->	Zombie
PUBLISHER -->	Ripcord Games
REQUIRED -->	P200 MMX without 3D card or P133 with 3D card, 24MB RAM, 60MB hard drive, 8X CD-ROM
IDEAL -->	P266, 32MB RAM, Voodoo 2 card

Spec Ops: Ranger Team Bravo

Still no spit and polish!

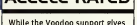
ACCELE-RATED

While the Voodoo support gives smoothness to the edges and decent explosive effects, there's not a lot that really takes advantage of your accelerator card.

VOODOO 2



VOODOO 1



RIVA TNT

NA

MATROX G200

NA

API SUPPORT: Glide

THE FUTURE

Here are a few add-on pack ideas for *Spec Ops* that we'd really like to see:

SPEC OPS: WACO
Forget the FBI, let's send in the rangers and do it right!

SPEC OPS: ANY HIGH SCHOOL IN ARKANSAS
Help cleanse the schools of gun-totin' Children who think they're all that.

SPEC OPS: POST OFFICE
Ten rangers don't get their Playboy on time and go to their local post office to complain in person.

SPEC OPS: RANGERS MAKE THE SERIES
God knows the Texas Rangers aren't makin' the World Series on their own, but send an elite squad to take out the Yankee pitching staff and the Lone Star State will finally have a team in the big game.

When the game in question is an add-on for an existing product, you expect it to be pretty damn near close to perfect — especially when the add-on has been in development for more than six months since the original shipped. Alas, such is not the case with *Ranger Team Bravo* (*RTB*), Zombie, Ripcord, and Panasonic et al's multiplayer add-on pack for *Spec Ops: Rangers Lead the Way*.

Spec Ops puts you in the boots of a two-man team of U.S. Army rangers for a series of missions in various hot spots around the globe, which you play from a third-person perspective. *RTB* adds three new minicampaigns to *Spec Ops*' original five, which consist of three missions each in Vietnam, Bosnia, and the top spot on everyone's blow-up wish list, Iraq. You begin by selecting the loadout for each ranger — you choose from presets for a sniper, grenadier, machine gunner, etc., or set up your own custom loadout from scratch — and then you go collect some ears ... er ... enemy dog tags.

The trouble with the loadout process is you *still* don't get your mission briefing until after the loadout screen — so you have to guess what you'll need or start the whole process over again once you get the briefing. And mission results are *still* not saved — doh! *RTB* does, however, add some much-needed mouse, gamepad, and joystick support. In *Spec Ops*, you could only play with the keyboard, which was kludgy at best.



"Spread 'em."

Clearly, *RTB*'s biggest addition is multiplayer support for up to six players over both LAN and Internet. There's straight deathmatch, team vs. team deathmatch, team vs. team missions, and co-op missions to play. All of *Spec Ops*' and *RTB*'s mission maps are available for deathmatching, plus there are six DM-only maps — a total of 31 maps. For my dollar, the team deathmatches and missions are where *RTB* shines the most brightly. Play was surprisingly responsive over a 28.8 connection to the Zombie server — at last!

Multiplayer mode aside, *RTB*'s AI still leaves a lot to be desired. The levels abound with signs of sloppy or hasty design; all over the place you encounter trees, rocks, and buildings that don't quite touch the ground. There are still some awful clipping problems where enemies' arms, legs, and even bullets protrude through walls. And there's no gore! Hey, I expect arms and legs to be flyin' around when I let loose with a grenade-launcher (perhaps I've played too much *Quake II* ... nah!).

With more and more third-person, "realistic" warfare games in the pipeline (and a few out, such as the awesome *Rainbow Six* and *Delta Force*), *Spec Ops* needs to get its act in gear fast. Right now it's far from an elite fighting force.

— STEVE KLETT ***would rather be a park ranger.***



What did Ranger One say to Ranger Two? "Just frag 'em."

GRAPHICS
If you've got a Voodoo card they're pretty good. If not, good luck.

SOUND
Best when played really, really, really loudly.

DEPTH
Lack of saved mission results and buggy nature beat down the replay factor.

DESIGN
Still fun despite its myriad of shortcomings.

RATING 5

Pluses

- Great multiplayer options
- Realistic weapons and effects
- Suspenseful at times

Minuses

- Quirky Internet play
- No gore, bad AI
- Random crashes

Be Afraid! Be Very Afraid!



Never before has such a twisted plan been baked! Help Pretzel Pete™, armed with his powerful Pretzel Net and mighty Mustard Cannon, rescue humanity from pretzel purgatory! Roll through torturous levels, battle half-baked bosses, and crunch up to 16 wicked opponents over the internet as you clean up the wild and mind-blowing levels!

- Battle against your friend on the same PC, or...
- Wage war against 16 opponents over the internet
- Supports the hottest 3D accelerators
- Mind-blowing 3D graphics

Buy it NOW online!

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GAME

www.xsivgames.com Toll Free 1-877-478-3258

Go to http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411: Product Number 5

Copyright © 1998, Stealth Productions, Inc. Pretzel Pete and the Pretzel Pete logo, XSIV GAMES and the XSIV GAMES logo are trademarks of Stealth Productions, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Microsoft and Windows are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and in other countries. Published by XSIV GAMES, P.O. Box 4010, Beverly Hills, CA 90213-4010


NEW! Missions and Levels
NEW! Multi-Player Network Combat
NEW! All existing levels now become Multi-Player and Single-Player
NEW! Load your Rangers with your choice of weapons
NEW! Ranger reinforcements
ripcord GAMES
Zombie
Panasonic
www.ripcordgames.com
TEEN
ESRB
Ranger Team Bravo
THE ADD-ON PACK TO SPEC OPS: Rangers Lead the Way
Your COUNTRY
Your HONOR
Your TURN
SPEC OPS: Ranger Team Bravo
• ADD-ON PACK
(must have the original game in order to play)
• PRO PACK
(includes the original game plus the ADD-ON PACK)
SPEC OPS: Rangers Lead the Way PRO PACK

DEVELOPER --> Mango Grits
PUBLISHER --> Activision
REQUIRED --> P200, 32MB RAM, 115MB hard drive, 2X CD-ROM
IDEAL --> PII 400, 64MB RAM, Voodoo 2 or Riva TNT

Barrage

The gaming equivalent of the blond

FORCE FEEDBACK

MULTIPLAYER

ACCELE-RATED

Mango Grits Incorporated D3D once TNT et al started giving Voodoo 2-like performance. Like Rage's *Incoming*, its visuals are the top selling point. Enjoy your hardware with a flashy tech demo.

VOODOO 2

VOODOO 1

MATROX G200

RIVA TNT

API SUPPORT: Glide, Direct3D

Pretty, smooth, fast as you could want, easy to get loaded, and absolutely, flat-line brain-dead — if *Barrage* were your date instead of your computer game, you'd be putting up sad little web shrines by now. But it's not, and you won't be. Oh, *Barrage* is lots of fun, and much more suited for multiplayer action than solo missions — think of it as *Extreme Assault* without the storyline and sense of discovery.

If it moves and annoys you, harass it with the deft sort of circle-strafing, vertical-helix maneuver you could only pull off in a plane with vehicle takeoff and landing abilities, and pump it full of cannon fire. If, on the other hand, the enemy in question really hasn't done anything to you (yet) that warrants a lot of hot lead, give it some space ... and fill it with plasma instead. It's a world of choice. (There's a five-piece nuke out there too, but you're gonna want to save that for an especially heinous occasion.)

You're a freelance have-combat-hoverplane-will-travel sort in a cheerily flip and violent future (the opening "commercial," with a used-car salesman's twang, pretty much sets the moral tone for the game), where the right of way goes to the most intense firepower.

Throughout five environment types — prairie, canyon, tunnels, water, and of course the ever-popular downtown Chicago — you'll face 16 enemy types, including helicopters, jet fighters, and ground defenses. There is an ultimate goal in this game, involving the glassing of a certain Super Secret and Incredibly Evil Weapon, but you're not going to have time to worry about that for a while. *Barrage* is, at heart, an arcade shooter, with the simple object of killing every hostile thing that flies, crawls, or swims as you search for each level's exit portals.

The game manual points out that certain enemies "evolve" over time into tougher ones, but it slyly neglects to point out that the AI itself changes, which is rather unusual. You get so used to the jar-heads you fight on the first Prairie level that by the time you've got air enemies actively psyching you in Chicago, it takes you by surprise. You don't have to worry about ammo or technicalities like crashing into the ground or scenery; this is pure arcade.

Barrage isn't all that bad — it's just that it ain't all that good. Its five-level, zero-tutorial, if-you-see-it-shoot-it design indicates that it was pushed out the door in a hurry. Not every game has to have wild depth and intrigue to be worthwhile, but yeeesh, this thing practically comes with a thin film of Velveeta right there on the shelf. If your situation is such that you can, at any time of day or night, jump into a *Barrage* multiplayer game when the mood strikes you (for 10 minutes or until you've had enough), this is the game for you. If you're one of those people who has to read while you eat or you'll go spastic with boredom, look elsewhere.

— CHRIS HUDAK *enjoys mindless violence as much as the next guy.*



Force-feedback joysticks will respond nicely to close-proximity blasts — one of the better effects in this tech demo.





Travel to graphically rich, gorgeous locales — and nuke 'em.

GRAPHICS

Rich, totally-roamable 3D environments — and no brain required.

SOUND

Effects are pretty standard stuff, but the panning allows you to keep an ear on nearby jets as they roar around.

DEPTH

How deep is it? How shallow is the ocean? How cold is the sun?

DESIGN

There's only so much you can do to a gumball machine — but at least it's pretty.

RATING

Pluses

--> Gosh, it's purty
--> Instant-gratification-made code
--> Stick around long enough and you can waste Chicago cops

Minuses

--> Limited control mapping — inverting Y axis in particular is a bitch
--> Timed missions
--> Utterly pointless fighting (maybe this is a plus)

Mango Grits is a four-man team formed of ex-Xatrix employees

DEVELOPER → Mad Genius Software
PUBLISHER → Mad Genius Software
REQUIRED → P133, 24MB RAM, 75MB hard drive, Sound Blaster compatible card
IDEAL → PII 266, 64MB RAM, 360MB hard drive

Gunmetal

Yippee! Let's pay to be beta testers ...

ACCELE-RATED

Gunmetal is a DOS game, but ships with Glide support for 3Dfx card owners. However, there is very little noticeable difference found in either graphics or speed in the so-called "accelerated" version.

VOODOO 2
1 2 3

VOODOO I
1 2 3

RIVA TNT
NA

MATROX G200
NA

API SUPPORT: Glide

BUGGY

Gunmetal isn't the first game to head out of the door unfinished. Here are a few other highlights:

BATTLECRUISER 3000AD
PUBLISHER→ Take 2
THE SPIEL→ This story won't go away. Derek Smart's long overdue idea was finally shipped by Take 2, which had run out of patience. It simply didn't work. Umpteen patches later and it turned into a decent, definitely bold, space action sim
THE FALLOUT→ Derek Smart loses house, wife, friends, his god, and who knows what else as it dominates newsgroups for years. *Battlecruiser 3020* is coming — anyone's guess when

OUTPOST
PUBLISHER→ Sierra
THE SPIEL→ For anyone who remembers, Sierra's much vaunted space colonisation strategy game was another that plain didn't work. Or when it did, it was incomprehensible, with some bizarre design decisions
THE FALLOUT→ For some reason, people just remember it as being a stinker

QUAKE II
PUBLISHER→ Activision
THE SPIEL→ Was it buggy? Er, dunno, but there've been a hell of a lot of patches. 3.10 was the shipping number and a year later we're on 3.19
THE FALLOUT→ None. It's *Quake*, so nobody minds

If there are five patches available for a game less than a month after its release, and there's still a handful of bugs, chances are it was rushed out the door. Such is the case with *Gunmetal*. It's a shame, because the above-average gameplay is not only hindered by its premature release, but also by weak graphics, fussy control, bad multiplayer support — and it's a freakin' DOS game to boot.

Gunmetal takes place in the 23rd century, when corporations have replaced politics and religion. You're employed by the all-powerful Nataka Corporation and must carry out a myriad of missions by controlling antigravity hovertanks or Remotely Piloted Vehicles (RPVs). You customize and save RPVs prior to each mission by purchasing (and properly balancing) chassis, armor, weapons, ammo, and equipment. (I'm not exactly sure, though, why you have to buy these parts if you're fighting on behalf of a mega-company.)

While the premise is cool enough, the graphics and control are an absolute mess. First off, I don't think I've seen an uglier user interface in any game. *Gunmetal* features blocky, pale graphics and brutal fonts. The in-game graphics are a mixed bag: good-looking reflections and explosions mixed with pixelated enemies and coarse textures. RPV control is very customizable, with keyboard, mouse, and joystick support, but the familiar "mouse-look" is so cumbersome to configure, you may give up in the process.

Multiplayer mode consists of eight players over a LAN or two at the same PC. The Windows version supports modem-to-modem, serial hook-up, or TCP/IP games in theory — though the game froze and crashed during both setup and gameplay in two-player modem-to-modem mode and over the Internet. A new version is being boxed at press time, complete with large stickers that proclaim "This one works, honest" or something similar.

Speaking of bugs, the single-player game also jammed and crashed more than a teen grunge band. Since it's a DOS game, be prepared to be kicked out to your desktop when you accidentally hit the Windows hotkey. *Gunmetal* requires too much work before and during the game to extract any worthwhile fun out of it. It's too bad that the imaginative levels and neat weapons are buried under a barrage of critical oversights — or shortages of time and/or money.

— MARC SALTZMAN *keeps warm by the glow of his monitor.*



The single-player game yields more than 25 varied levels through cities, farms, military installations, and even underwater.





Does this look like a "state-of-the art 3D engine" or "the next quantum leap in the evolution of the 3D shooting game" as it says in the press release?

GRAPHICS
A bit better than the Build engine, but still very '96. Like, totally.

SOUND
The MIDI music is quite good, but the sound effects are very cheesy.

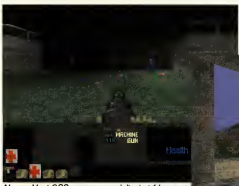
DEPTH
If you can get past the technical flaws, there are some challenging levels.

DESIGN
An interesting, but unfinished, futuristic vehicle shooter.

RATING 4

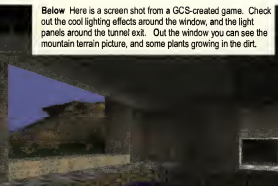
Pluses
→ Neat weapons and level design
→ Good music
→ Intelligent AI

Minuses
→ Buggy, unfinished, hard to control
→ God-awful user interface
→ It's a DOS game



Above Most GCS owners are adults, but 14 year old Jerome Everall is working on this game called 'Escape!' The icons on the bottom of the screen are inventory items that have been picked up. Here the bottom 1/3 of the screen is used for information display, but going fullscreen 3D is also an option.

Below Here is a screen shot from a GCS-created game. Check out the cool lighting effects around the window, and the light panels around the tunnel exit. Out the window you can see the mountain terrain picture, and some plants growing in the dirt.





Above Our 3D Windows 95/98 engine might not leave ID Software quaking in their boots, but you can create spectacular 3D worlds and terrific gameplay for your customers.

All those HOURS playing 3D games were NOT wasted.

Use what you have learned by creating and selling your **OWN 3D GAME!**



Use the included paint program to make your own artwork or import .GIF, .PCX, or .BMP images. The GCS comes with over 100 pre-made images for you to use, and even more are available at low cost!

Use our Pie 3D Game Creation System to make your own 3D games and sell them for $$$. No programming or special skills required!

You don't have to spend years learning to program before you can make a game. We have created a game design program so you can concentrate on the fun and creative aspects of making your own game. But the best part is that also have created a Windows 95/98 3D game engine which we allow you to sell as part of your game with no additional royalties or fees!



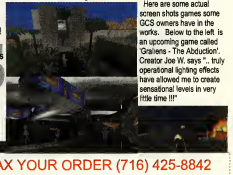
Pictured above is the layout editor, complete with pulldown menus and icons. Building your levels is accomplished using simple drag-n-drop operations with your mouse.

It doesn't matter how old you are. It doesn't matter if you are rich or not.

This is the information age where anyone with a semi-decent computer can make their own entertainment product, start a Website, and start selling their creation. The only thing that matters is your own ability and determination.

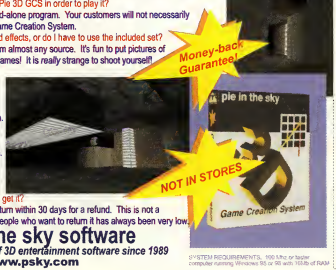


- **Your final product will be a true 32bit Windows 95/98 game**
- **We use Microsoft's Direct X/Direct 3D technology**
- **Runs in 256 or 16 Million color video modes up to 1280x1024!**
- **Uses your 3D hardware acceleration if your video card has it**
- **Create right sources, staircases , variable height floor/ceilings**
- **Make indoor or outdoor scenarios**
- **Use included .WAV file sound effects or record your own**
- **Use included artwork, or create your own**
- **Easy to use level editor can put up to 39 levels in your game**
- **100+ page manual, and demo game levels included**
- **Make up your own cheat keys and game secrets**



Here are some actual screen shots games some GCS owners have in the works. Below to the left is an upcoming game called 'Grallens - The Abduction'. Creator Joe W. says "... truly operational lighting effects have allowed me to create sensational levels in very little time !!!"

Q: If I sell many copies of my game, and make lots of money, how much will I owe Pie in the Sky?
A: Zero, Zip, Nada, Nothing. After the initial purchase, you owe us no additional royalties or fees.
Q: Will people I sell my game to need the Pie 3D GCS in order to play it?
A: No, the game you create will be a stand-alone program. Your customers will not necessarily know it was created with the Pie 3D Game Creation System.
Q: Can I import my own artwork and sound effects, or do I have to use the included set?
A: You can import sounds and images from almost any source. It's fun to put pictures of yourself and your friends in your 3D games! It is *really* strange to shoot yourself!
Q: Do the games have to be violent?
A: No, like most features in your game, this is entirely up to you.
Q: Will my game support multi-players?
A: No, but expect a multiplayer pack soon.
Q: What is the recommended age?
A: Most users are adults, however many customers are between 12 and 18 also.
Q: What stores can I find the GCS in?
A: You can only get it directly from us. You can order toll-free anytime.
Q: What if I am not satisfied with it when I get it?
A: If you are not happy with the GCS, return within 30 days for a refund. This is not a problem for us, since the number of people who want to return it has always been very low.



SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: 100 Mhz or faster computer running Windows 95 or 98 with 16Mb of RAM

FAX YOUR ORDER (716) 425-8842
OR PHONE 800-537-3344 (24 hour)
OR MAIL A CHECK TO US:

pie in the sky software
1596 Ayrault Rd. Fairport, NY 14450
(716)425-8782

NAME:_____

STREET:_____

CITY:_____STATE:_____

ZIP:_____PHONE #: () -

❑ CHECK/MO (Payable to Pie in the Sky Software)
❑ Charge my credit card: ❑ MC ❑ VISA ❑ AMERICAN EXPRESS

Credit Card #:_____EXP:__/__

Signature:_____

❑ US Priority Mail (Add $5.00 shipping & handling = $74.95)
❑ C.O.D. (Add $12.00 shipping & handling = $81.95)
❑ Overnight Express (Add $15.00 shipping & handling = $84.95)
❑ 8% Sales Tax ($5.60 - New York only)

Price $69.95

pie in the sky software
Developers of 3D entertainment software since 1989
www.psky.com



Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 70

Let's Wrap It Up

THE STANDINGS

If we hate anything, we hate wishy-washy reviews. You want to know which game is best? Well, here are the most comprehensive, straightforward, no BS match-ups you will ever find. If you choose a losing title, don't say we didn't warn you.

	GAME TITLE	W	L	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	REALISM
FOOTBALL	NCAA 99	2	0	1	0	2	2
	GameDay 99	1	1	0	2	1	1
	Madden 99	0	2	2	1	0	0
	Those planning to gripe about *Madden*'s third-place finish can send email to wherethesundontshine@pcxl.com.						
GOLF	Tiger Woods 99	2	0	2	1	1	2
	Golden Tee Golf	1	1	0	2	2	0
	Fox Sports Golf 99	0	2	1	0	0	1
	It's all well and good that *Tiger* is 2-0, but *Links LS* is still the only golf game you need.						
HOCKEY	NHL Hockey 99	2	0	2	2	2	2
	NHL Hockey 98	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Powerplay 98	0	2	0	0	0	0
	NHL Hockey did the unthinkable: It beat itself as the best sports game on the market. Honestly, this isn't even fair; the *NHL* series is making a mockery of our standings.						
BASEBALL	High Heat 99	4	0	0	3	4	4
	Triple Play 99	3	1	4	4	3	2
	VR Baseball 2000	2	2	3	2	2	1
	HardBall 6	1	3	2	0	1	3
	Microsoft Baseball 3D	0	4	1	1	0	0
	This is it, the final score for baseball in 1998. *High Heat* holds the top spot for the entire year despite its lackluster graphics. Gameplay is king, baby!						
SOCCER	World Cup 98	2	0	2	2	2	2
	Fox Sports Soccer 98	0	1	1	1	0	1
	Sensible Soccer 98	0	1	0	0	1	0
	World Cup 98 still doesn't have any real competition until EA's *FIFA 99* arrives.						

On the world of PC sports, this is the time of year when you finally get a chance to look back and see which titles emerged as the best of the best. Baseball season is over and all the game ratings are in, football season is in full swing with the heavy hitters all in place, and hockey season is starting, which means one game has a shot at the title.

This year the baseball competition got a late contender in *VR Baseball 2000*. This long-overdue title is facing an uphill climb compared with the other PC baseball games that enjoyed the sales push of a phenomenal baseball season, but it arrives just in time for the playoffs.

The final big name in football is finally in our hands, and our review just may shock you (Sierra's *Football Pro* is still presumably on the way, but its developers have been quiet, which usually is not a good sign).

Hockey is a much simpler call. Right now *NHL 99* is the only contender on the horizon. The future of Radical's *National Hockey Night* is questionable considering EA's recent moves toward swallowing up its rival. And even if it is released, any hockey title is going to have a tough time surpassing the balance and polish of *NHL 99*.

So there you have it, the end of the year, and with *NBA Live 99*, the start of a whole new year. If upcoming games with the marketers' dream moniker "2000" are as much of a leap forward as this year's titles were over the previous year's, *1999* is going to be great for sports fans.

— DAN EGGER's *1999 will likely be as uneventful as his 1998.*

DO YOU PLAY SPORTS GAMES?

At PCXL we play sports games almost as much as we play *Quake II* and *Rainbow Six*, but we're willing to concede that maybe we aren't typical gamers. If you consider yourself the typical hardcore gamer, take a minute to fill out our survey and send it to: Sports in PCXL, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA, 94005, or if you prefer, fill out our online form at www.pcxl.ign.com/sportspoll. Thanks!

I RANK PC SPORTS GAMES:
- ☐ Right up there with *Quake II*
- ☐ Below shooters and RTS games, but still fun
- ☐ Below games like *Ultima Online*, and I pretty much could not care less
- ☐ Low. They make me throw up until stuff comes out of my nose

I WISH THE PLAY BY PLAY SECTION HAD:
- ☐ More reviews
- ☐ More previews
- ☐ More pictures of cheerleaders
- ☐ Fewer pictures of Neil O'Donnell

PC SPORTS GAMING IS:
- ☐ On the upswing
- ☐ On the downswing
- ☐ Still not up to par with consoles
- ☐ Geared only toward stat-freaks

I PLAY SPORTS GAMES:
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Roughly as often as other action games
- ☐ Religiously
- ☐ Right until I blur the line between my scores and the real scores

killer game!

NHL 99

The best is back and it's better than ever

DEVELOPER → EA Sports
PUBLISHER → EA Sports
REQUIRED → P166, 16MB RAM, 30MB hard drive
IDEAL → PII 300, 32MB RAM, Voodoo 2 card

ACCELE-RATED

The Glide version looks awesome, but the Direct3D version is just about as good.

DUAL VOODOO 2 (SLI)
1 2 3

VOODOO 2
1 2 3

MATROX G200
1 2 3

RIVA TNT
1 2 3

API SUPPORT: Direct3D, Glide

If you never played *NHL 98*, you really missed out. Not only was it the best hockey game on the PC in the last year, but also the best sports game, period.

If you did miss it, you now have a second chance with its sequel, *NHL 99*. Even though it is not a complete overhaul from last year (like that game needed many changes), this newest version offers enough enhancements for hardcore hockey fans to justify its purchase.

The first and most notable change is the improvement in the broadcast-style presentation. Between plays the camera swoops around and fades scenes into one another, making the game look like a television production. Also the animations of the players have been buffed up even further, which is saying quite a bit.

Another change is the toning down of the cartoon bodychecking from last year's version. Sure, you can still knock opponents through the glass (which also wobbles and shakes on impact), but it's not as dramatic. Likewise, the regular checks knock opponents down, but not 20 feet across the ice. We are officially disappointed by this, even though it makes the action look more realistic.

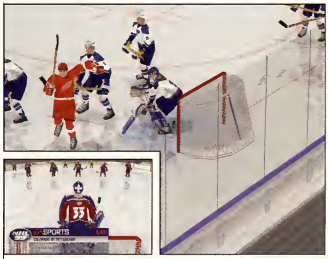
You will notice that the computer AI has been significantly beefed up. Many of the "money shots" found in last year's version are all but useless now. The defensive AI is smarter, stopping the player from shooting rather than just making it more difficult to get the puck past goalies. The coaching options have also been improved, giving you more options and more opportunity to use your players' heads as well as their hockey sticks. New offensive and defensive play options, as well as an improved on-the-fly play-calling system, are key additions.

The control and feel of *NHL 99* are just like last year's game, which basically means it's dead-solid perfect. Also as good as last year is the smooth and unobtrusive play-by-play commentary, which should be a model for all sports games.

One of the few disappointments is the absolute dismantling of the fighting engine. Last year the fighting wasn't great, but it was far better than this year's weak fisticuffs. While *NHL 98* was often called the best fighting game on the PC, *NHL 99* provides a limp, ineffectual fighting diversion where players don't even connect with punches, and the control makes you feel like you aren't even playing the game. It takes only one or two fights until hockey's best distraction is disengaged by most players.

Despite this minor gripe, *NHL 99* belongs side by side with *Quake II* as a part of any gamer's software library.

It's just that good.



Player animations have improved, the goalies are much tougher, and the defense is much smarter. All in all, this is a great game.





Crotch-cams and sissy fights are *NHL 99*'s only flaws.



Forget scoring goals, the best thing in hockey is knocking some dimwitted Canadian through the protective glass.

GRAPHICS
Smooth, fast, and very realistic.

SOUND
Excellent commentary and great sound effects.

CONTROL
Almost perfect.

REALISM
This is still the most realistic PC sports game.

RATING 9

Pluses
→ Near flawless control
→ Better AI than last year
→ Cool ice spray

Minuses
→ Sloppy fighting game
→ Players smile after they're beat up
→ Not much else

Madden 99

DEVELOPER → Tiberon
PUBLISHER → EA Sports
REQUIRED → P200, 16MB RAM, 20MB hard drive
IDEAL → PII 400, 64MB RAM, dual Voodoo 2 (SLI)

Nothing looks better, but how does it play?

ACCELE-RATED

This great-looking game needs a monster system to run at its best. A dual Voodoo 2 enables you to run the game at its highest settings, which is a sight to behold.

DUAL VOODOO 2 (SLI)
1 2 3

VOODOO 2
1 2 3

MATROX G200
1 2 3

RIVA TNT
1 2 3

API SUPPORT: Direct3D, Glide

First things first: No football game has ever looked better than *Madden 99*. From the dead-on stadiums to the mind-blowing player models, this game gets the look of football just right. A caveat to that: The horsepower required for this look is downright scary, considering it takes a PII 400 with dual Voodoo 2 cards to keep things running smoothly at the highest settings. But it does scale down nicely, naturally losing a little of the luster along the way.

The animations fit perfectly with the player models, with a larger variety of tackles, moves, and celebrations than in any other football game. Watching Barry Sanders sidestep to quickly evade a Junior Seau tackle only to be flipped on his back by William Fuller is like watching the real thing.

Unfortunately, these amazing graphics come with a bit of a price tag. The longer and more beautiful the animation, the less control afforded the player. For instance, when Eddie George busts around the corner he will often get wrapped and violently thrown back by a sidestepping defender who in real life would only be able to drag him down. A sense of momentum is lost to flashy graphics. This results in an either-or running game, where the plays are either very short gains or long touchdown jaunts.

Even though this is a problem, the running game is still better than in any past *Madden* game. The passing game plays like it always has; getting a pass off requires more speed than reading defenses. It's a test of rote memory, and even in the optional directional passing mode, more control of where the pass goes would have been nice. It's getting downright stale compared with *GameDay*'s Total Control Passing, which actually rewards players for reading defenses and finding the open man.

Another major problem is that the game doesn't adapt to widely used controllers. If you use the Microsoft SideWinder Pad (the best controller for sports games), you aren't given button listings that correspond to the pad. Instead, *Madden* gives you a number system, so you are forced to calculate on the fly which button correlates to which number. This is a major distraction. EA Sports' marketing deal with Gravis is getting in the way of good service for users of other controllers.

Despite the passing game and control limitations, it's hard to see how more detail could have been added. The statistic tracking is detailed right down to the handy in-game updates of your most used players and clear post-game statistics. And the game's deep franchise mode is the perfect way for wannabe general managers to test their sports executive skills over several seasons.

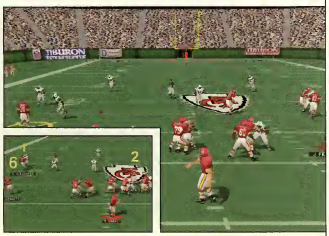


Madden is one of the most impressive year-to-year improvements EA has made on the PC, and gives us great hope for next year. Unfortunately it falls below the current competition.

If EA could mix the gameplay of *NCAA 99* with the graphics of *Madden 99*, it would have one of the best football games of all time on its hands.



No football game's graphics come close to the amazing player models in *Madden 99*. But awful control configuration is a big problem.



GRAPHICS
Unbeatable with amazing players, believable stadiums, and lifelike animations.

SOUND
Commentary is good, but could use more variety.

CONTROL
Players tend to "skate" and not cut very sharply.

REALISM
Unrealistic running game loses points here.

RATING 7

Pluses
- → Best football graphics
- → Plenty of options
- → Smart AI

Minuses
- → All or nothing running game
- → Lack of passing control
- → Lack of player momentum

DEVELOPER ⇢	VR Sports
PUBLISHER ⇢	Interplay
REQUIRED ⇢	P200, 32MB RAM, 50MB hard drive, 3D card
IDEAL ⇢	PII 300, 64MB RAM, dual Voodoo 2 (SLI)

VR Baseball 2000

We've seen the future, and it is flawed

ACCELE-RATED

VR Baseball 2000 looks nice if you have the horsepower to play it. The game moves just as good on a Voodoo 2 as it does on newer Direct3D cards, but the G200 or TNT make it look better.

DUAL VOODOO 2 (SLI)

VOODOO 2

MATROX G200

RIVA TNT

API SUPPORT: Direct3D, Glide

Welcome to the year 2000. It's an age that's far removed from your own time period. In the year 2000 nearly everything you are familiar with will be radically changed. Take, for instance, baseball. Judging by the futuristically titled *VR Baseball 2000*, the sport will be dramatically altered for the new millennium. And to prove it, here are our predictions on the future, according to this new game.

In the year 2000, players will be more rounded, with realistic bodies, but faces that all look the same. VR Baseball 2000 takes advantage of (and often suffers from) Shiny's *Messiah* graphics engine. Player models look great, even if there is tearing at the junction of some body parts. The faces are a different story, looking identical to one another with only minor changes in skin tone — Barry Bonds looks nothing like Mark McGwire (apart from here).

In the year 2000 players will squat... often. The animations are detailed during the action, but when players are static, waiting for a fly ball or holding a runner before throwing to first, they immediately go into an awkward squat pose that looks plain silly.

In the year 2000 pitchers will have to wait for the batters to stop warming up before they pitch. VR Baseball passed on a typical pitching/batting meter for a "seamless" interface instead. This means that you have to memorize commands for pitches before playing, instead of having a selection after each pitch. Eventually this gameplay can be learned, but you should at least have a visible choice of pitches. Even though a barely audible sound registers the pitcher's selection, it is often difficult to know when a pitch is called. To make matters worse, when a batter takes warm-up swings, he conflicts with the pitcher's control, so no selections can be made.



Fielding is tight, but *VR Baseball* does tend to suffer a little from the typical baseball game problem of too many singles.

In the year 2000 base runners will tag up with two outs. In Pee Wee, Colt League, Babe Ruth League, the Minors, and the Major Leagues, every player knows not to tag up with two outs, so why do the players do it in this game?

In the year 2000 players will never miss a fly ball. By taking away fielding control from players, *VR Baseball 2000* takes the fun out of fielding. When a pop fly is hit, your player moves toward its final location even when fielding assist is set to zero. For some reason, no setting exists where players have complete and total control of their fielders.

In the year 2000 baseball will be fast — really fast. VR Baseball 2000 has plenty of flaws, but it does do one thing better than the rest: It offers fast, furious play. A game between two good hitting players can be as short as a half-hour. Minimum extraneous details mean that you can absolutely fly between innings and spend time only on gameplay (we would, however, like the option to shag foul balls for fielding practice).

All in all, *VR Baseball 2000* is a valiant attempt that shows potential but fails to hit the right mark. Even though it plays quickly and efficiently, further problems such as boring game sounds, occasionally fielderless camera angles, and player rosters that will be outdated next season keep this game below the best in PC baseball.



The players look good close and stay detailed far away.



This guy looks nothing like McGwire. Must be Andro.



Player motions are smooth during set animations.

GRAPHICS

Well-rounded players, but limited in real detail.

SOUND

In-game sounds could have been more involving.

CONTROL

Players should be able to field without assistance.

REALISM

Ball physics are great, but more diverse players would be a plus.

RATING

Pluses

- Sweet player models
- Good throwing control
- Fast gameplay

Minuses

- Generic player faces
- Lack of fielding control
- Bland stadiums

HEAD TO HEAD

baseball

	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	REALISM	FINAL
HardBall 6 vs. VR Baseball 2000 The battle begins with *VR Baseball 2000* against Accolade's *HardBall 6*.	**EDGE** ***VR BASEBALL 2000*** The organic players in *VR Baseball 2000* tip the graphics scale to its favor.	**EDGE** ***VR BASEBALL 2000*** *HardBall 6*'s robotic play-by-play commentary drops its score below even the bland sounds of *VR Baseball 2000*.	**EDGE** ***VR BASEBALL 2000*** *VR Baseball 2000*'s controls are tighter and the camera work is far better.	**EDGE** ***HARDBALL 6*** Accolade's title includes slightly smarter base runners.	**WINNER** ***VR BASEBALL 2000*** *VR Baseball 2000* (1-0) tops *HardBall 6* (0-1) in a relatively easy battle.
Triple Play 99 vs. VR Baseball 2000 In the second face-off, EA's *Triple Play 99* takes on the less broad-cast-oriented *VR Baseball 2000*.	**CLEAR WINNER** ***TRIPLE PLAY 99*** *Triple Play* just plain looks better on almost every level.	**CLEAR WINNER** ***TRIPLE PLAY 99*** *Triple Play* wins again, thanks to its near flawless color commentary, game sounds, and stadium noise.	**EDGE** ***VR BASEBALL 2000*** Despite overbearing computer assistance, *VR Baseball 2000* controls tighter.	**EDGE** ***VR BASEBALL 2000*** *VR Baseball 2000*'s defensive AI, control, and gameplay feel more like real baseball.	**WINNER** ***TRIPLE PLAY 99*** *Triple Play 99* (3-1) edges out *VR Baseball 2000* (1-1) because presentation does matter.
High Heat vs. VR Baseball 2000 The final match for *VR Baseball 2000* is the toughest, as it goes head to head with the reigning PC baseball champ.	**EDGE** ***VR BASEBALL 2000*** Flat sprite players just can't compete with *VR Baseball 2000*'s 3D polygonal characters.	**CLEAR WINNER** ***HIGH HEAT*** *High Heat* has better play-by-play and much better in-game sounds.	**CLEAR WINNER** ***HIGH HEAT*** *High Heat* gives you total fielding control, unlike *VR Baseball 2000*.	**EDGE** ***HIGH HEAT*** Two solid computer AIs, but *High Heat* wins because it gives a better overall baseball experience.	**WINNER** ***HIGH HEAT*** *VR Baseball 2000* (1-2) falls short once again, and fails to unseat *High Heat* (4-0) from its top position.

football

	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	REALISM	FINAL
Madden 99 vs. GameDay 99 A veteran PC title squares off against the current king of consoles.	**CLEAR WINNER** ***MADDEN 99*** No football game looks nearly as good as *Madden*.	**CLEAR WINNER** ***GAMEDAY 99*** The commentary and game sounds of *GameDay* are far more exciting than those in *Madden*.	**EDGE** ***GAMEDAY 99*** Tough call here, but *GameDay* players just react quicker.	**CLEAR WINNER** ***GAMEDAY 99*** A better running game and a much deeper passing game give *GameDay* the win.	**WINNER** ***GAMEDAY 99*** *GameDay* beats *Madden*, but not by much.
Madden 99 vs. NCAA 99 Usually the big kid on the block, the *Madden* series finds itself facing down a serious upstart in *NCAA 99*.	**CLEAR WINNER** ***MADDEN 99*** Didn't you read the last match-up? No football game comes close to *Madden* in this area.	**EDGE** ***MADDEN 99*** Madden's and Summer-all's commentary tip the scales in *Madden 99*'s favor.	**EDGE** ***NCAA 99*** The players in *NCAA* run better and their moves are more effective.	**CLEAR WINNER** ***NCAA 99*** A better running game and more varied player speeds give *NCAA 99* the title here.	**WINNER** ***NCAA 99*** *NCAA 99* wins simply because it's a lot more fun than *Madden*.
GameDay 99 vs. NCAA 99 Can a college football title actually take the top spot from two NFL games?	**EDGE** ***NCAA 99*** The players look better, and they actually have names on their jerseys (if you provide the name).	**CLEAR WINNER** ***GAMEDAY 99*** *GameDay* has significantly better play-by-play and in-game sounds.	**EDGE** ***GAMEDAY 99*** *GameDay* has tighter controls and its Total Control Passing system is more intuitive and adaptable than that in *NCAA 99*.	**EDGE** ***NCAA 99*** A more realistic running game, wider speed differentials, and believable tackling momentum make *NCAA* the more realistic choice.	**WINNER** ***NCAA 99*** *NCAA 99* makes it a clean sweep and takes the honor as best PC football game for this year.

NBA Live 99

PREVIEW

DEVELOPER → EA Sports
PUBLISHER → EA Sports
RELEASE DATE → November '98

THE HYPE

Real players, real faces, and real expressions.

THE HURDLE

Honestly, who really wants to see Jeff Hornacek's smarmy grin after a trey?

THE HIT

Basketball for the PC is finally ready for the big leagues in a slick new 3D accelerated package.

Wanna know what Scottie Pippen looks like when he's baked?

Since Dr. J brought his massive afro, high-art jams, and superstar nature to professional basketball, the sport has been all about personality. Like no other professional sport, the NBA lives and dies by its stars, so it's understandable why EA went to so much effort to make its *NBA Live 99* characters look so much like the real thing.

Each of the players has been modeled after photos of his NBA equivalent. The resemblance is uncanny at times. And to make these players look even more realistic, EA added expressions and attitude to each face, which makes all the difference in a real game. Right from the opening loading screen you can see who each player is without even looking at his name. The characters are modeled right down to their ear sizes and head shapes (which is quite a feat considering the misshapen melon of Sam Casell).

One odd thing about the team select screen really stands out, however. Because of their exaggerated facial expressions, the players look like they have all violated the league's substance abuse policy (which in most cases isn't too far from the truth). EA has promised to tone this down, but frankly we don't mind so much. When you see Chris Webber or Allen Iverson in this state, you realize no other game is going to make them look so much like they appear on a Friday night.

The facial expressions change during the game, and the players follow the ball with their eyes and heads. This adds up to incredibly lifelike gameplay. Imagine Grant Hill dribbling around Stephon Marbury to dunk, opening his mouth to shout as Kevin Garnett and Anthony Peeler watch with disappointment on their faces. It looks that good.



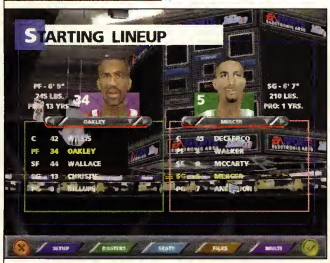
Head tracking means all the players watch the ball during a shot, except for Nick Van Exel, who is looking for a ref to shove.

And to make the game look even more like a television broadcast, animated crowd textures react to each play, cheering for the home team after big buckets.

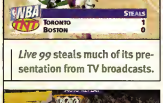
While the graphics are a significant leap over last year's version, the gameplay has been improved just as much. The control already feels tighter and offers more for players to do during the game. Setting up plays, icon passing, choosing between preselected dunks, and calling for picks are just a few of the options that players can easily call up. The expanded coaching options let you see what it's like to be Pat Riley without having to worry about the permanent effects of Brill Cream on your scalp. Add all this to the realistic graphics and you have a title that both looks and plays great. It's a feat that few sports titles have managed on the PC, but one that this game could very well manage.

A few things could push this game over the top during the last months of development. A raucous play-by-play call would add the necessary audio oomph to the wild dunks, and occasional on-court temper tantrums would make you feel like you really are controlling an NBA star. Even if these things are not added to the game, it's pretty apparent that basketball games on the PC are finally catching up with the rest of PC sports. Frankly, it's about time.





The changing facial expressions range from really dumbfounded (Charles Oakley) to really ... uh ... mellow (Ron Mercer).



Live 99 steals much of its presentation from TV broadcasts.





WCW NITRO™



• The most realistic PC wrestling game ever!



• Over 60 of the top WCW and NWO superstars



• Signature and finishing moves, taunts, and rants

THQ

more than you can handle

WINDOWS '95

WCW Nitro © 1998 World Championship Wrestling, Inc. A Time Warner Company. All rights reserved. WCW™ and NWO™ are trademarks of World Championship Wrestling, Inc. All characters depicted, are trademarks of or used under license to World Championship Wrestling, Inc. All rights reserved. THQ TM 1998 THQ INC

HELP, I'M A MULTIPLAYER SCREW-UP!

It's the age of multiplayer gaming, but how many people have really embraced the concept? According to a recent Interactive Digital Software Association survey, an astounding 43% of those playing online games have been doing so for less than a year, which means a lot of people are getting their first taste of online gaming right now. So let's say you are one of those players, wanting to know what all the fuss is about, but a little afraid of what you will face on other side. It's OK, we've all been there. To help you, we have assigned the most inept gamer on the staff, the desperately uncoordinated Robert Powderhorn, to find out what it's like to be a screw-up amongst the hardcore.

CASE STUDY #1: THE EXPERTS' PLAYGROUND

STARCRAFT

WHERE TO PLAY---> ONLY BATTLE.NET

BATTLE.NET SCORE

BEGINNER FRIENDLINESS--->	C+
LAYOUT, EASE OF USE--->	B-
OPPONENT INFORMATION--->	C-
GAME VARIETY--->	B
FINDING A GAME--->	A

StarCraft is a perfect example of the toughest type of game to break into. It doesn't matter how good you are against the single-player missions or how badly you can kick the computer's butt — when you hit Battle.net for the first time you quickly realize what an inept tool you really are. This (free) online service gives you minimal information on how to find a good game, broken down into zones that are meant to separate players according to ability. But the results reminded me of when my junior high PE coach would separate us into groups during gym glass. Even though I made it patently clear that I was a wrestling novice, I would inevitably be paired against some foul-smelling, 12-year-old gene-pool disaster sporting a five o'clock shadow. When you join a newbie game and get stomped by experts, it's a frightening reminder of those bygone days when you spent 42 minutes every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday with your nose stuck in some pre-adolescent Neanderthal's armpit.

Face it, *StarCraft* has been solved. You will never start the game as a "natural" because all the strategies that you've practiced against the computer have little or no effect on good human opponents. So your best bet is to start simple and build your skills against human players from the ground up. Finding a good training ground is extremely difficult because the multiplayer world is full of experts who prey on unsuspecting newbies. Like bargain-crazed soccer moms flocking to a K-Mart Blue Light Special, win-hungry experts looking for an easy kill will pounce on you the minute you let it be known you are starting out. The following tactics helped me get off to a safe start.



Battle.net is generally an easy place to find a newbie game.

GIVE YOURSELF A NEWBIE NAME

Even predators have a bit of a conscience and will feel the occasional twinge of guilt when killing a player called Cancer_Victim or Don't_Hurt_Me_Im_Eight_Years_Old.

STAY OUT OF RUSH GAMES

If a game has "RUSH" in the title, stay out until you are skilled in the art of building large forces fast. These short battles will teach you little or nothing about how to play the game.

BOND

Find a good player and forge an alliance that you can exploit. A real expert can cover you as you make early mistakes in team games, and you can also watch his building process to get tips.

GANG UP ON THE COMPUTER

Start by joining co-op games that pit you against outnumbered computer foes. Watch your allies and see how they fight. These matches are easier than human vs. human matches and are great for building confidence.

HOST YOUR OWN SERVER

Create a newbie-only game and check the scores of each new player who enters. If an obvious expert (or even a winning newbie) steps in, boot him. That way, you can create the most secure newbie environment for honing your skills.

EXPERTS' GUIDE

EXPLOITING NEWBIES

While newbies like Mr. Powderhorn are trying to perfect their craft, it's time for us vultures to score a few easy kills. The following techniques are a perfect way to clean up.

→ **Host** newbie games and lure in the beginners while booting good players
→ **Rush** early and leave 'em near death, but not all the way dead. Keep building your forces in the background and harassing your enemy until you can crush his meager defenses with disheartening force
→ **Change** your password and log in often, resetting your score and looking like a familiar face to a hapless newbie. Join newbie games and kill to your heart's desire

Once you have gained a little confidence in your multiplayer abilities, you must build your playing strategy. At the core of these strategies is your build order. Know these by heart because if you don't get off to a good start, you will not win. Below is a simple but effective build order.

GENERAL-PURPOSE STARCRAFT BUILD ORDER

1. Build six gathering units
2. Use the seventh to create a support structure
3. Build one or two more gatherers
4. Build a unit creation structure
5. Build one or two fighting units
6. Build several more gatherers
7. Build another support structure
8. Build a Vespene gas facility
9. Diverge production depending on game conditions

Worst gym class sports: square dancing

CASE STUDY #2: THE NEW BATTLEGROUND

RAINBOW SIX

WHERE TO PLAY---> THE ZONE and MPLAYER.COM



THE ZONE SCORE

BEGINNER FRIENDLINESS--->	A+
LAYOUT, EASE OF USE--->	A
OPPONENT INFORMATION--->	B-
GAME VARIETY--->	A
FINDING A GAME--->	A

MPLAYER.COM SCORE

BEGINNER FRIENDLINESS--->	C
LAYOUT, EASE OF USE--->	B-
OPPONENT INFORMATION--->	C-
GAME VARIETY--->	B
FINDING A GAME--->	B-



Compared to the simple and intuitive interface of the Zone, MPlayer's design is hard to decipher.

For those ready to try a multiplayer game for the first time (or for an all-around poor player like myself), the best possible learning arena is a new game like *Rainbow Six*. During the first few weeks after a game's release the playing field is usually pretty even. Also, you will be able to share your growing pains with other players trying to learn the ropes. The growing multiplayer community behind *Rainbow Six* is a perfect example.

Imagine being on a swat team with Barney Fife, Gilligan, Screech, and the Chicago Bears' defensive backfield. Now you have a pretty good feeling of what a beginners' match in *Rainbow Six* is like. You have to worry about teammates getting in your way, shooting you in the back, or fragging you with an errant grenade. But amidst this chaos you have a wonderful learning opportunity.

Rainbow Six team matches are usually short, which means there are plenty of chances to learn from your mistakes. In the moments of silence after you die, you have the opportunity to figure out why you died. You also have the chance to ask others what went wrong, watch the survivors, or better yet, taunt all those who died before you.

While *Rainbow Six* shipped with support for two free gaming services (Microsoft's Internet Gaming Zone and MPlayer), the Zone is clearly the best for the beginning gamer. It features a simple interface that gives you a clear view of the type of server and competition you will face. Its only downside is that you can't determine how good your competition is by a rating system.

On the flip side, MPlayer.com is a nightmare for a beginner. Right off the bat, you will have difficulty deciphering the game information. Instead of using intuitive visual cues that tell how good the ping and competition is, the service forces players to enter each game and figure it out for themselves. This results in many more wasted lag games than you will ever find on the Zone.

After you play through a couple of the single-player levels (try planning missions with just one soldier) and feel confident with the controls, you are ready for multiplay. One thing you will have to watch out for is the occasional team-killing idiot. Below I have collected a few ways you can protect yourself from them (and yourself).

THE PARANOID GAMER'S GUIDE TO BEATING TKERS (TEAM KILLERS)

WATCH FOR TELLTALE SIGNS

If several people squat at the beginning of a match or switch to pistols, they are signaling each other. They will likely start shooting, so your best bet is to shoot them first.

RUN FAST

Being the first guy out of the starting gates is good for a few reasons. If the TKer starts shooting, your teammates will shield your back with their dying bodies. If he tries to blow up everyone with a grenade, you will likely outrun the blast. If someone pulls a grenade right off the bat, he could be the culprit; your best bet is to shoot him first (again).

ASSUME THE WORST

Sometimes a good TKer will pick off his team members during the heat of battle, so if a bullet hits you from an odd direction, your best bet is to shoot any teammates in your vicinity.

CHECK THEIR NAMES

TKers hide under many different names. Some are obvious like IKillTeammates, others try to deceive you with clever names like IDontKillTeammates, and if you ever run into anyone with **"PCXL"** in his name, he will most likely kill you. If you find someone with a questionable name, your best bet is to shoot him first.

ALWAYS STRIKE FIRST

Face it, anyone could be a team killer, so your best bet is to wipe out your team from the start. Sure, some people will call you a TKer, but you won't get taken down. And sure, you will get booted from server to server, but it's a fair trade. If they cause too much of a fuss, change your name, re-enter the game, join the host's team, and from there your best bet is to shoot first and ask questions later.

In the end, though, team killing is not the only thing that will get you booted from a good server. Occasionally an overly zealous host will boot players for offensive behavior. Here are some actual (and highly questionable) reasons I was booted from *Rainbow Six* servers while researching this story.

- Changing my name to FactsOfLife_Natalie (the fat one)
- Saying that I was associated with the player known as Diarrhea_Sprays
- Claiming to be Dutch_Tornado's illegitimate father
- Impersonating a half-naked Bea Arthur between matches
- Typing the entire theme to "Different Strokes" during the game
- Refusing to shoot enemies until all the glass in the level has been shot out
- Espousing the benefits of **PC ACCELERATOR** over the competition
- Following The Paranoid Gamer's Guide to Beating TKers

Man, I hate server hosts.

EXPERTS' GUIDE

EXPLOITING NEWBIES

---> Join clan training servers. These are usually a group of idiots looking for allies to save their butts. Easy kills all around
---> Rush into battle. Newbies are generally timid and prone to early attacks
---> Be patient, get your aim, and secure your target. Newbies will often fire quickly before their aim is settled

CASE STUDY #3: THE WAR-TORN LAND

QUAKE II

WHERE TO PLAY---> GAMESPY, TEN, and a million other servers

GAMESPY SCORE

BEGINNER FRIENDLINESS--->	C-
LAYOUT, EASE OF USE--->	D+
OPPONENT INFORMATION--->	B+
GAME VARIETY--->	A
FINDING A GAME--->	A+

TEN SCORE

BEGINNER FRIENDLINESS--->	B+
LAYOUT, EASE OF USE--->	B+
OPPONENT INFORMATION--->	B+
GAME VARIETY--->	A
FINDING A GAME--->	A+

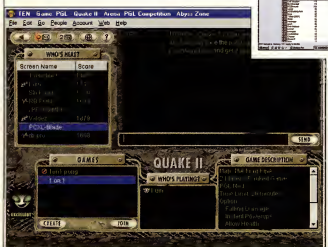
HEAT SCORE

BEGINNER FRIENDLINESS--->	C
LAYOUT, EASE OF USE--->	B-
OPPONENT INFORMATION--->	C-
GAME VARIETY--->	C
FINDING A GAME--->	D

I have a dirty little secret that I just can't keep hidden anymore. I suck at *Quake II* multiplay. When this game hit the PC market, I owned a PC that had the processing power of a Sears toaster oven, and now that I (and hundreds of thousands of other gamers) have upgraded my rig, it's time to see what all the *Quake II* fuss is about.

The problem with *Quake II* multiplay is that the community is really based on stand-alone servers. However, thanks to John Carmack's excellent client-server code, you don't have to rely on gaming services to find good games. Instead you can surf countless individual games. One program, GameSpy, offers just about everything you need to track down the best of these games, giving you an enormous amount of detail on each individual game. It lets you pick the best one. Even though I have the technical competence of a black and white colobus monkey, I was able to download and configure GameSpy for my system within half an hour. While some people like this gritty way to find the best *Quake* game, some prefer a simpler approach.

What about diehards like TEN? The PGL was a master stroke and keeps some of the best *Quake II* players on the service during qualification. Otherwise, those players are likely to be on specific servers, fine-tuning their art. That means that there's lots of opportunity for newbies. Game quality varies greatly, from the best to the worst. But the interface is simple, you can page other players, have private chats, and do all that community stuff. Caveats are that you get an open chat room and idiots flock to it like flies to sh... the honey pot. But game



TEN's interface is much more intuitive than GameSpy's.



HEAT's interface is problematic for first-time users, and it's often hard to find a game.

style options are plentiful, and there are always games going on.

HEAT is a newcomer with a solid lineup of games. However, its *Quake II* area always seems devoid of any game options. Only a few games are going at any time, although for a newbie, this is appealing, as the standard is also pretty low (which is especially great for me since I couldn't hit a cow's arse with a banjo). The free server is quick to configure once the 5MB download is complete, and certain elements are very similar to MPlayer's lobby model, which is skewed younger than TEN's clean-cut lines.

Once you get started on *Quake*, understand this: You are going to die, and die a lot. Considering how long the game has been on the market, and its continuing online popularity, veterans will quickly outclass you when you start. Take comfort in this as you die and die and die (or check out our strategies from the PGL pros in the October issue). Fortunately, if you do stick with it (more than a couple nights), you will begin to find out why this game is played so much. Also, your practice here will prepare you for the online frenzy that *Half-Life* will bring when full multiplayer options are released.

If dying repeatedly hurts your pride, try a few of my tactics. They won't keep you alive, but they will make your journey to the next life a lot more fun.

HOW TO DIE IN STYLE

GO DOWN TAUNTING

Pick the best player on the server and taunt him relentlessly until he ignores all others and focuses all his rage on you.

EXPERTS' GUIDE

EXPLOITING NEWBIES

--> If they **crouch** (a favorite newbie tactic), shoot them
--> In short, **camp**. They don't know the levels well enough to know what you are doing, making a slaughter very easy
--> If they are the kind of newbies who stand still, **circle strafe** and kill them. If they are the kind of newbies who run around wildly, stand still and kill them

SUICIDE BOMBER

All you need is a rocket launcher and a lot of guts. Grab your weapon and run directly at opponents, firing a rocket at the ground in front of you the moment you reach them. You both die, but your victim will never know what hit him.

THE ROCKET JUMP OF DOOM

Rocket jumping is not a beginner skill (right now I can only get parts of my body to actually rocket jump), so have some fun practicing in the middle of a full-on deathmatch, letting people watch as your gibbed body flies across the highest parts of the level.

KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES

Maybe you can't get as many frags as the leader, but you can always try to match his score with minus points caused by killing yourself. In really good matches you will have to find useful lava pits, explosive weapons, or high ledges to jump off of before a leader uses you to boost his score.

BETTER TO DIE WITH DIGNITY

Sure you may suck the big one at *Quake II*, but that doesn't mean you should allow some snot-nosed punk to rack up easy kills. The vultures on *Quake II* servers have a way of smelling a newbie and killing him repeatedly for easy wins. If you feel you are becoming victim to this, then the only solution is to kill yourself before anyone else can. It will infuriate players who have wasted their time chasing you all over the level just to get robbed of a kill. At this point taunting them is also advised ("You can't kill me punk — only I have that right!").

IF SOMETHING BLOWS, WE WON'T LIE ABOUT IT.



News • Downloads • Reviews • Previews • Codes

www.ign.com

Imagine Games Network

Half-Life: HOW TO MAKE IT EASIER

SO YOU THINK YOU'RE A FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER EXPERT, EH?





Expert tip: When you see this, turn around and run like hell. You could stay there and die, or you could run like hell and still die. The choice is yours.

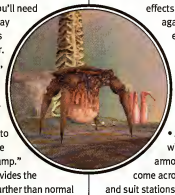
Don't need no stinkin' pointers on how to shoot a few aliens? Think again, *Quake*-boy. As our exclusive review shows, *Half-Life* isn't your usual shooter. So put the ego in check and find out the best way of handling the armory and the beasts standing between you and a long, happy full life.

PCXL has spent enough time in the depths of the Black Mesa Research Facility as all hell broke loose around them to have a pretty good idea how to stay alive as long as possible. Understand, this strategy section includes info on all the weapons and all the monsters in the game. If you don't want to find out what they are or what's waiting around the next corner for you, check through the basics only.

IN THE BEGINNING

As with most first-person shooters, there are a few simple rules to live and die by. *Half-Life* features monsters that act like they want to stay alive. They want you dead, that's for damn sure, and they're prepared to use cheating devices like tactics, sensible movement, and teamwork. So you'll need to use that ol' gray matter as well as the trigger finger.

So for starters, even if you're an expert, run through the Hazard Course. You're not likely to learn much, aside from the "long jump." The HEV suit provides the power to jump further than normal using a quick Crouch- and Jump-key combo. The secret to pulling off this move is holding down the Crouch key when you press Jump. It may take a few attempts, but be assured, you'll be happier trying and failing here than realizing you can't make a few all-important jumps once you reach the alien world of Xen.



BASICS

- The crowbar is not an effective weapon. Unless you're really low on ammo, use it only for belting the crap out of inanimate objects like the myriad of boxes and crates strewn about the place.
- Watch the red damage location sign from the suit. It can alert you to creatures behind you, as well as some of the environmental effects you're up against. Steam jets, exposed wiring, and radiation can all chip away at those valuable health and armor points.
- Always top up with health and armor whenever you come across the first aid and suit stations, even if it's just a point or two. If you don't exhaust it, remember where it is — you can always go back later.
- There may come a time when you have to take a dip in water. Neither the shotgun nor the combat rifle work underwater, so stick to the 9mm pistol or grenades — and get to dry land as fast as possible.
- Use your ears. Even if you're not using A3D audio technology, you can still get a great sense of where bad guys are coming from. Especially in the earlier levels, where the damage caused by the early explosion is more apparent, the air vent system is the only viable route. Make sure you can pull off the quick jump-crouch move to leap into these tight areas.
- Always use your torch when it's dark. It's highly likely that the sudden appearance of some fiend from hell is going to scare you to death even in broad daylight. Don't give them a chance to enhance the effect in the dark.
- Scientists can help out with medication as well as information. If you've taken damage, talk to the scientists (with the Use key) and they may offer a helping hypodermic.
- Security guards should not be shot — even though it may be great fun. They'll shoot back, and will also attack should you decide that a scientist looked at you funny. Bring them along as far as they'll come. They're great shots, and also pretty hardy — and it's very reassuring to have active help in an environment in which it seems like you're the only one doing anything positive.
- Finally — and this cannot be stressed enough — always, always, *always* reload. Choose a Reload key very close to your main controls. Know how many shots your weapon holds, and count. Always check between battles. Even if it seems the coast is clear, take these opportunities to reload. You'll rue the moment you forgot when there's a Head-Crab in your face and you're fumbling in a mad panic for the Reload key (it takes a couple of seconds before you can fire). As a test, count how many times you die in the first couple of hours through not reloading — you should learn quickly.

And for the really lame out there, try this hint — use the Quick Save (F6) often. Ignoring the philosophical issues of creep-and-save gameplay, it's a useful technique. Of course, real men would rather take on the challenge head-on and only Quick Save at each of the (frequent) loading points.

Weaponry



⇦ CROWBAR



Secondary attack: None
Important info: Use on boxes, crates, and glass. If whatever you're bashing doesn't break after 10 hits, it probably won't.

⇦ 9MM PISTOL



Secondary attack: None
Important info: 18 rounds. Limited damage. Auto-aim is fast and effective, making it useful against multiple small creatures at medium range.

⇦ 357 MAGNUM



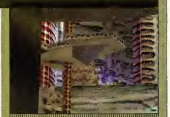
Secondary attack: None
Important info: Six rounds. It's slow to load but inflicts a lot of damage. Use every round sparingly.

⇦ SHOTGUN



Secondary attack: Both barrels
Important info: Eight rounds. Use the secondary attack sparingly. It uses two rounds so limits four shots per load. Not effective at distance where the buckshot widens. Very effective when fired from short range at slow-moving targets.

CROSSBOW ⇨



Secondary attack: Sniper scope
Important info: Five bolts. Use these amazingly deadly bolts sparingly. The sniper scope is great for hitting unsuspecting targets at distance (you can even see the bolt sail away). Remember, you can only load five bolts, and the reload time is very slow. Use a shotgun or the combat rifle against multiple opponents in a melee.

COMBAT RIFLE ⇨



Secondary attack: Grenades
Important info: 50 rounds, eight grenades. You'll be using this more than any other weapon. While the mag holds 50 rounds, they fire quickly, so always check and reload when you're down to 20 or less. Effective at all ranges. The grenades do not fire far, so look up slightly to lob a grenade at a distance. Useful for hitting enemies hidden behind barricades of any kind.

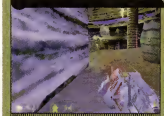
⇦ RPG



Secondary attack: Non-laser guided
Important info: Five rockets. This laser-guided rocket can be vital for clearing a lot of monsters from a safe position. The rocket fires out, and once the smoke trail starts, you can change its direction by moving the laser pointer. Don't use in tight areas where you may turn it in to a wall near yourself (doh!) or in a tight spot against multiple creatures. This one is for the big bugs.



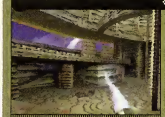
TAU CANNON



Secondary attack: Multiple round stack

Important info: 60 cells. This powerful laser beam packs a kick — and not just on the monsters. A single shot will throw you back a number of feet, so never use this gun on ledges or other places where there's a very good chance of falling. While a primary shot takes five rounds, you can fire multiple single shots with the secondary function. For more power, hold down the Secondary Attack key to stack up to 12 shots that fire when you release the key. This type of shot does not kick you back and can also go through multiple targets in a straight line. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem like you can fire the Tau into the ground and push yourself into the air à la the rocket jump.

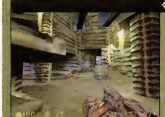
GLUON GUN



Secondary attack: Rail gun-like shot

Important info: 60 cells. This device spews out a steady stream of plasma that's useful for mowing down a roomful of enemies. Charge it up (wait a second or two), then clear out even the Alien Grunts with aplomb. Use the secondary function to fire a powerful single straight blast in a similar fashion to *Quake II*'s rail gun.

HIVEHAND



Secondary attack: Single projectile

Important info: Eight shots. This device is the primary weapon of the Alien Grunts, so by the time you get it, you should be familiar with its insect attack. Rapid firing sends out a spray of bugs that home in on a target, even if you can't see it. They actually move around corners and into hiding spots to get their sting in. The secondary fire sends out just one bug in a straight line in a more conventional attack. The eight-shot store is constantly replenished; you just have to wait a few seconds for the hive to create more bugs.

GRENADES



Secondary attack: None

Important info: Carry a max of 10. The good old grenade is simple enough, and deadly enough. Useful for clearing rooms thick with monsters — and also an effective tool against water-based creatures, used while you're on dry land.

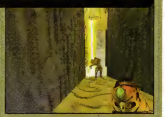
SATCHEL CHARGE



Secondary function: None

Important info: Five charges. The remote-controlled explosives can be used on humanoid enemies, but are most useful when used against static targets such as gun turrets. Remember, you have a remote control, so you can place a charge, move away, then fire it — or place a charge on, say, an elevator, send the elevator away, and remote detonate it from total safety.

SNARK

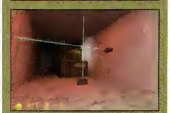


Secondary function: Bites you in the ass

Important info: Six snarks. These little creatures are weapons? Well, yes and no. They will run at some targets and start attacking. Problem is, if they don't acquire a target (and many of the aliens don't class as targets) the little bastards will come running back to you and start leaping and biting the hand that threw them in the first place. They're an ingenious "fire-and-forget" weapon, so long as they have something to attack.

LASER-TRIGGERED CLAYMORE







Secondary function: None

Important info: Five charges. These are the classic trip mines. If you used them in *Duke Nukem 3D*, you know what's expected here. The excellent enemy AI means that a lot of creatures won't run wildly around corners chasing you — so placement of the claymores is tough. It seems better to use them against enemies like the Marines who are more likely to move in on your position. They will stumble into your traps *[evil cackle]*. Think about enemies coming from behind you. The claymore can act as an early warning device if something's sneaking up. That said, be wary that you don't block off a possible escape route.

Monsters



HEADCRAB



What they do: Leap out of the shadows and scare you to death. Until the HeadCrab comes within about 10 feet of you, you're fine. Let them closer and they leap. Listen for the telltale rustling sound — your ears are likely to catch them before your eyes. In certain situations, waiting for them to leap and then casually sidestepping (it's got a matador flavor to it) can save ammo, and cause great hilarity as they fly over a ledge. Believe me, you will have nightmares about this hell spawn, so take every opportunity to get one over on them.

What you do back: Two 9mm pistol rounds will do the trick. Here, auto-targeting is really useful. They're small and fast when they leap, so let the computer help out. A single shotgun blast takes them out but is overkill, and its limited auto-targeting scope gives you a chance of missing and wasting shells.



MAWMEN (ZOMBIES)



What they do: Lurch zombielike at you, flailing two clawed arms. Don't let them get close — their left-right combo is fairly easy to avoid, but their double-fisted whack when they close in can be deadly.

What you do back: Use a crowbar or a close-up shotgun blast to the head. Their attack is slow, so by moving in quickly, smacking with the crowbar, and then retreating while it goes through its one-two attack, and repeating, you can get the kill and conserve ammo. Only try this trick on individual zombies. When there's more than one, use the same movement to get close in, then plant a single-blast shotgun shell to its head.

HAGWORMS



What they do: Nibble you to death underwater. What at first seems like a harmless scenery decoration can turn deadly when these worms start digging in their tiny fangs.

What you do back: Flail maniacally with the crowbar. It only takes one strike and they die, so any time you spot them underwater keep whacking the crowbar, get on with your business, and ignore the squishing sound of iron on soft, fleshy leech.

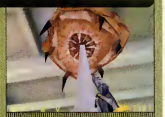
HOUNDEYES



What they do: Squeal like mad and emit a sonic blast wave. Ignore their puppylike chirping, gay hopplty-skipping, and doe-eyed blinking — they will still attack and don't make good Christmas presents.

What you do back: A single shotgun blast is all that's needed.

BARNACLES



What they do: Pretend to be ropes. There are no ropes for you to climb in *Half-Life*, so if you see one, there's a Barnacle on the end. They have a nasty habit of dropping a sticky rope from their dark recesses on the ceiling in the middle of walkways. Walk into one and you'll start heading toward its sharp-fanged mouth.

What you do back: Two shotgun blasts (or three if it's some distance away) will cause it to spew its contents. Remember, if you're already caught, don't panic, but look up and shoot like mad — it will drop you if you kill it before getting to the fangs.

BULLSQUIDS



What they do: Spit viscous acid. This acid attack has a surprisingly long range. The core damaging part of their snot ball is in the middle of the spray that comes out — so avoid that and don't worry so much about dodging the smaller chunks. Don't let them get near either, as their multiple proboscis bite is quite powerful.

What you do back: Fill it full of lead from the combat rifle. You're likely to see the BullSquids from some distance away — so use the longer range of the combat rifle. Also, BullSquids and HeadCrabs don't get along — so if both creatures are nearby, let them fight each other, then go mop up the leftovers (usually a weakened BullSquid).



ICHTHYOSAURS



What they do: Bite and flail tails at anything that invades their underwater domain. These prehistoric throwbacks move with surprising speed and their bite is nasty. In any water-filled area, watch for their fin above water before diving in.
What you do back: Remember that many weapons don't function underwater. Lob a couple of grenades in, hit it from above water with the combat rifle, and finish it off when submerged with the 9mm.

OPRAHASAURS

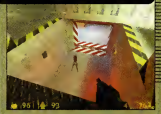
What they do: These beasts mainly serve to annoy the hell out of you. The skinny Oprahasaurs tempt you with luring poses, then reveal their flaccid skin which eventually grosses you out so that you never want to play games or see nekkid women again.
What you do back: It is wisest to avoid them, but if caught in close quarters simply toss bad books at them. They will read them and then shamelessly sell them at Starbucks across the nation.

GUN TURRETS



What they do: Hidden behind sandbagged defenses, the gun turrets hit anything that moves.
What you do back: A carefully lobbed grenade (either hand, or fired from the combat rifle) through the small hole in the defenses may take a few attempts, but it's just about the only way. Getting into position to hit it is tougher. Use whatever cover (crates or other sandbags) is available. Rocket launchers are manned by one guard. Try to pop him from a distance with the .357 Magnums.

STATIC GUNS



What they do: Red trip wires alert motion-sensing static guns. The trips are almost impossible to avoid, so just use them as reminder that a powerful gun is hidden somewhere.
What you do back: If you see a gun without tripping its motion sensing, one slug from the .357 Magnum will take it out. Other options include grenades — they can take out multiple turrets. Be wary of throwing grenades at guns that have already got you targeted — the guns pick grenades out of midair, exploding them in your face if you're not careful.

STATIC CLING

What they do: Constantly cause that embarrassing moment where your clothes are stuck together. This usually happens after an especially long session in the dryer.
What you do back: Bounce is a fine product that goes into the dryer and usually takes care of the problem. There are several off-brands and archaic methods, but in our washing experience we find Bounce to be most effective.

BULLDYKES



What they do: Venomous man-haters suffer from a serious case of penis envy, often wear a mullet, and can be formidable athletes.
What you do back: We love lesbians as much as the next guy, but at some point the BullDykes start to look and act too much like men. It is best to avoid these creatures, but if you're pressed into battle, threatening Melissa Etheridge may help.

VORTIGAUNT



What they do: Fire a crackling green energy stream. These weak aliens are at the bottom of the Xen food chain. Listen for the crackle of energy as they prime their attack — this can give you a vital second to get out of the way. Alien slaves generally don't get on well with the Vortigaunts and they can attack each other. Let them go at it — there's nothing wrong with cowering in the corner if it saves you facing them.
What you do back: A quick burst with the combat rifle will floor them.



⇦ ALIEN GRUNTS





What they do: Piss you off. These large beasts (looking like alien kin of *Unreal*'s Brute) are the source of the Hivehand weapon. This attack is most deadly since the insect swarm homes in on you wherever you may hide. Make sure you don't get up close either, as their fist attack is pretty lethal.

What you do back: Kill it as fast as possible. When you first encounter them, the combat rifle grenades followed by a quick burst of lead is a good tactic. Later, once you have the crossbow, two bolts will fell it. Or try the Tau Cannon — it leaves a nice scorch mark.

⇦ ASSASSIN



What they do: Move like lightning and flit about like those famous **PCXL** fleas on crack (what do you mean you've never heard of fleas on crack before?). Another great example of tactical thinking, these assassins move swiftly, have deadly aim, and make themselves very small targets by crouching their lithe bodies.

What you do back: Patience, grasshopper. Listen for the sound of their shoes clicking on the ground. Most likely, the first you'll see them is as your HUD displays the direction they hit you from. It's all down to reactions. In open rooms, sectioning off areas with laser claymores can limit your seek-and-destroy tactics — but this requires planning and strategy. Maniacally chasing them blazing the combat rifle is another reasonably effective tactic.

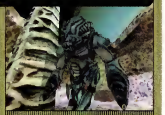
⇦ TENTACLE



What they do: Attack sounds. The Tentacle cannot see, so you can run up to it, flip it off, whatever, so long as you don't make a sound. Put your meaty clogs on echoing metal and the thing will stab you faster than, well, you can get out of the way. So use the Walk option, and move very, very slowly.

What you do back: No conventional weaponry is going to destroy this beast. You're going to have to come up with another plan ...

GARGANTUA ⇨

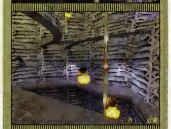


What they do: Fortunately, these huge beasts are pretty dumb. If you stay very still, they're likely to pass you by (and, in fact, you might need their bumbling strength to break down a few rocks to allow you to get by). Should they spot you (through smell or sight), run like hell — their attack sounds like someone switched on a blow torch and is pointing it at your face.

What you do back: Run. Big weapons are needed to fell these beasts. The RPG is probably the most effective.

XEN MASTERS ⇨





What they do: These aerial creatures swoop in packs, firing stinging but slow-moving bolts of what seems like yellow plasma.

What you do back: The shotgun is effective. You can knock one out of the air with two clean shots, but getting the clean shots is the problem. Use the combat rifle when they're flying far away — and aim for their fat heads.

THE REST...

Of course, we could tell you how to defeat the last couple of creatures in the game, but that would be spoiling it just a little too much ... Next month: the multiplayer version.



How Will 3Dfx Survive?

The company that has been clearly at the head of the 3D acceleration revolution, 3Dfx, is facing its toughest challenge to date. On the hardware side, companies like Nvidia (with the TNT) and Matrox (with the G200) have released chipsets that provide near Voodoo 2 speeds for Direct3D games, and on the software side, Microsoft's DirectX 6.0 is making serious inroads with developers, potentially at the expense of Glide. The company itself is not worried (at least not publicly worried), and in a recent interview with its head of business development, Scott Sellers, we found out why.

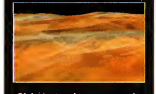
"The difference between us and the other hardware makers is that 3Dfx was created to focus on content, technology, and branding from day one," Sellers said. The company's three-way focus means that it approaches the market less like a traditional semiconductor company than does its competition. This is most apparent in 3Dfx's developer relations. Not only does 3Dfx give game developers new hardware, it also sends its engineers to demonstrate how to get the most out of the Voodoo chipsets. "By giving [developers] the tools to make our chipset widespread, we make it the de-facto standard," Sellers explained.

DEVELOPER SUPPORT

Here are some of the techniques 3Dfx is currently evangelizing.



Using the dual processors of the Voodoo 2 card, developers can render complex mirror images of characters which they can use for things like portals and, when mapped on a body, *Predator*-type characters.



3Dfx is also pressing a new wave of technology that enables developers to create large, undulating surfaces.



By breaking down large groups of particles into controllable groups, developers can create lifelike particle physics effects for their games.

The company also designed the first Voodoo chipset with a console business model in mind, creating a standard development architecture that would last for two to three years. This means that even though technology is changing every six months, developers know that their Glide games will continue to be supported into the future.

On the software side, DirectX 6.0 has all but caught up with Glide, and many developers have turned their attention that way. Glide was one sure means that 3Dfx had to ensure its market leadership, because as long as it was the premier 3D API, cutting-edge developers were all but required to make Glide-specific versions of their biggest games — just look at Id's flagship *Quake* games. According to Sellers, the company understands the threat, but is moving toward the future. "The value of Glide will be at its high point when a new version is out. We've kept our platform stable for two years, and while DirectX 6.0 may be catching up, what happens next will be most important."

Standardization also makes it easier for game developers. The lure of big, bad Microsoft's DirectX 6.0 and its compatibility across all the new chipsets is an appealing factor when choosing API support. Making specific patches for various chipsets is proving a bane to developers (as John Carmack recently said, he wouldn't be too disappointed if a couple of the card people disappeared — it just clears the playing field and makes it easier for developers to support all gamers, whatever their card options). Glide will really have to push the hardware to its limits in order for those cutting-edge companies to follow suit with specific Glide support.

Underlying this is obviously 3Dfx's next version of Glide and its new generation of hardware. To keep ahead of the pack, the company is currently focusing on image quality at the pixel level, full scene anti-aliasing, lighting effects on the pixel level, and particle effects. And while the company understands that it's easier to be a follower than a leader, 3Dfx is at a crossroad. The next few moves it makes will determine its future as the leader of the 3D accelerator market.

THE POWER METER

The battle for the top spot is hot in the busy holiday period. Sierra gets the nod for top billing, but the big publishers have prominent presence.

THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH	
1	3	**SIERRA**—› *Half-Life* is this holiday's hottest game. Not to brag, but we have been playing it exclusively.
2	1	**GT INTERACTIVE**—› Forthcoming holiday games still don't add up to *Half-Life* in the "anticipated" category.
3	2	**ELECTRONIC ARTS**—› Its '99 sports games have proved worthy. Use of Radical and ESPN license TBD.
4	7	**ACTIVISION**—› Geeks (aka Trekkers) rejoice, a 10-year "Star Trek" deal will kick off with the *Insurrection* tie-in.
5	8	**RED STORM**—› *Rainbow Six* rides high on the PC Data sales charts, with great critical and commercial success. Will it last, though?
6	6	**MICROSOFT**—› Software (AoE, etc.), developers (DirectX 6), hardware (controllers, speakers) and Internet (www.zone.com). They have it all. Damn them,
7	-	**ID SOFTWARE**—› Screenshots released on *Quil*. Initial impressions: it's ... curvy, and ... brown.
8	5	**EIDOS**—› Buying companies, still. Lots of stuff in the pipeline, but it all seems stuck in the pipeline.
9	2	**3D REALMS**—› Interest in *Duke Forever* still high, but there's possible *Prey* turmoil as Paul Schuytema and lead programmer leave.
10	-	**MONOLITH**—› *Shogo* and the LithTech engine are hot, but there's still junk like *Get Medieval* coming from them.

OTHER CONTENDERS

3DFX—› New technologies are still coming out, and its work with game developers remains unsurpassed.

NVIDIA—› TNT arrives and hits the mark for many. But its lawsuit with 3Dfx is likely to hit development funds. Which is a shame.

NOWHERE IN SIGHT

ION STORM—› What the hell is going on over there? *Doppelganger* cancelled and *Daikatana* still some months away. Millions of dollars well spent?

LUCASARTS—› No one's offering any details of what's happening to *Force Commander* (no Episode One link, apparently). Indy looks like Lara, and we still haven't forgotten *Rebellion*.

FANTASY FRAG

SOUTH PARK



WHY WE HATE IT—› What happens when the shock value of this initially hilarious, now insanely over-hyped show wears off? You have an unfunny, trying-too-hard, predictable, trendy has-been that is trying to find ways out of the corner it painted itself into. News flash for fans who still think it's "rebellious" and "edgy": Your parents think it's a hoot too.

HOW IT SHOULD BE FRAGGED—› All the world's unwanted "South Park" merchandise, fawning articles in *Spin*, and BASKEtball promotional materials should be lifted into orbit in a giant mass and dropped on the people responsible for this show. Stay dead, Kenny!

THE WOMEN WE LOVE TO PLAY

NIKKI



If you are going to make a third-person game, one key seems to be to make a character that's as fun to watch as the game itself. With *Vigilance*, SegaSoft nailed this concept on the head — with not one, but three gorgeous lead characters for you to lead through the game's anti-terrorist missions. These leads, Duchess (otherwise known as Nikki), Kestrel, and Fury, are Bondlike beauties who are as deadly as they are lovely. *Vigilance* should be out soon.

OTHER HOT FEMME TEAMS



Charlie's Angels

Guns, muscle cars, and feathered hair — what more could a guy ask for?



The Spice Girls

Hey, we didn't watch their videos for the music. Scratch the skanky Sporty Spice and we'll give 'em what they want, what they really, really want



The Golden Girls

When we reach 102, these ladies will seem mighty sexy ... on second thought, never mind



The Go Go's

Mmmmm, Belinda Carlisle and uh ... some other girls



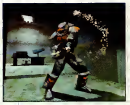
Bad Girls

The movie sucked, but Madeline Stowe looks hot in chaps

GAMESCAN

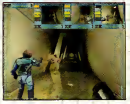
THE '70s TV EDITION

Sometimes we get games that we just don't have the space to cover in Previews, so we cover them here, in the funkiest section in this whole happenin' magazine. This month we compare the hottest upcoming games with '70s TV shows for no apparent reason.



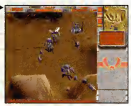
REQUIEM: AVENGING ANGEL

DEVELOPER→ Cyclone Studios
PUBLISHER→ 3DO
RELEASE DATE→ Spring '99
THE GAME→ You play an angel trying to save the earth from heavenly beings turned bad, and have the nasty ability to turn people into pillars of salt. The latest version we've been playing is one of the scariest games in ages (scary in a pee-your-pants good way).
IF IT WAS A '70s TV SHOW→ "Requiem" would star Adrien Zmed as the avenging angel, and one of his special powers would be the ability to keep Merv Griffin from "getting down," if you know what we mean.



X-COM ALLIANCE

DEVELOPER→ MicroProse
PUBLISHER→ MicroProse
RELEASE DATE→ Summer '99
THE GAME→ Players command a crack squad of soldiers in the *Unreal* engine and blow the snot out of enemy aliens. The game also promises plenty of chances to explore alien vessels, recover and research artifacts, and play out what promises to be an intriguing storyline, staying true to the *X-COM* franchise.
IF IT WAS A '70s TV SHOW→ It would star a coked-up unknown named Robin Williams. In between alien slaughters, you could watch the actor create hilarity out of his drug-induced dementia.



METAL FATIGUE

DEVELOPER--> Psygnosis
PUBLISHER--> Psygnosis
RELEASE DATE--> *Summer '99*
THE GAME--> For starters, this game takes realtime strategy and makes it fully 3D. Add some funky Japanese manga cartoon robots and set the whole rigamarole in a multilayered world where you fight on the surface, in the sky, and under the ground, simultaneously. The art design alone could possibly separate it from the heaps of other realtime strategy games.
IF IT WAS A '70s TV SHOW--> "Metal Fatigue" would be one of those creepy Japanese animation cartoons that you hated when you were a kid, which made no sense but still were better to watch than the five millionth rerun of "Gilligan's Island."



WAR OF WORLDS

DEVELOPER--> Rage
PUBLISHER--> GT Interactive
RELEASE DATE--> Winter '99
THE GAME--> *War of the Worlds* has a cool back story, a neat design concept set in the Victorian age, and promising realtime gameplay. Add to that the special effects track record of Rage (the maker of *Incoming*) and you know you will have a title that will at least be fun to look at.
IF IT WAS A '70s TV SHOW--> The still-living-but-well-past-his-prime Orson Welles would star in this weekly series of fake news reports meant to scare the bejeebers out of really dumb people.

The Heat-O-Meter

HOLIDAY EDITION



WHAT'S HOT

EPIC'S BANK ACCOUNT--> Another company, Psygnosis, licenses the *Unreal* engine for a new game, *Hired Guns*. In other news, Tim Sweeney promises to have the long-awaited *Unreal* multiplayer patch ready, sometime before the year 2389.

HALF-LIFE--> Sierra's first-person shooter debuts with a jaw-dropping OEM demo. After seeing how well this game played, several competitors were mysteriously delayed.

BOLDLY GOING DOWNHILL--> Activision signs a 10-year exclusive deal for the "Star Trek" license. By the time it's over the only thing left to base a game on will be William Shatner's toupee.

CAL WORTHINGTON FERRARI IN AUSTIN--> Id Software releases a *Quake* collection with the original game and two add-ons. Guess John Carmack's old Ferrarri needs a mate.

SHELTER FOR FUGITIVES--> GT Interactive picks up *Fugitive*, a new company created by ex-Blizzard staffers. The company claims its first title will be a completely unique product. It's called *DiabloCraft III*.

WHAT'S COLD

THUMBS DOWN RULINGS--> A judge declares that Micro Star's third-party add-on pack for *Duke Nukem 3D* is illegal. He also declares it "somewhat repetitive." Now he's infringing on our copyrights.

INNOVATION--> Sierra Sports has signed with *Field & Stream* and *Outdoor Life* to make new hunting games. The bandwagon is officially full.

OSCAR HOPES--> Early drafts of the *Tomb Raider* movie script leak out. The two people who actually thought that a movie based on a videogame could be anything less than atrocious are reportedly very disappointed.

MOURNERS--> Accolade cancels its upcoming space shooter *StarCon* with a decidedly apathetic response. What if you threw a funeral and no one showed up?

THE SOUNDS OF WAR--> Both Creative and Aureal are battling it out in court and in the press. If only we had a volume control for whining companies.

ADVENTURE GAMES--> Blizzard fails to revive *Worcraft Adventures* after receiving a petition, signed by almost 2,000 gamers with really bad taste.

BEHIND THE SCENES AT PCXL

THE ART OF THE FOLIO FILLER™

In case you haven't noticed, on the side of every page of PCXL is some sort of fact, snippet, or comment. These range from ludicrous real-life facts, to insane off-the-topic ramblings. They are there for your amusement and we hope they provide an extra bit of information you just won't get anywhere else. We call these little gems Folio Fillers™, and we are ready to unveil the top-secret techniques used by PCXL editors to come up with over 100 of these an issue. (Special note to our competition: Steal away, but by the time you've read this we'll have Folio Filler v2.0 ready to ship.)

Method 1: Take content of game and make a helpful reference about its real-life equivalent
(For *Motocross Madness* review)
FF: Things to do when in a motorcycle crash: cover face, bleed, cry like a baby

Method 2: Take location of game or developer and make a helpful reference
FF: If in Vegas we suggest Olympic Garden, craps, and the Lance-A-Lotta Pasta buffet

Method 3: Take the name of any celebrity or known figure on the page and give disturbing fact or useful information
FF: Tony Danza starred as a dumb guy named Tony in four separate TV series

Method 4: Take content from story to come up with a factual list, which you then evenly intersperse with complete lies
FF: Symptoms of testosterone deficiency: decreased libido, breasts, need for cuddling, small prostate, unusual kindness, matching socks, small testes, asking for directions (The real are bolded, so you can get a better look at the process.)

Method 5: Uncover a little-known fact
FF: The rocket jump was actually a quirk in the physics model; Romero found it while messing around
FF: 12% of men admit to having ignited their own farts

Method 6: Throw in any kind of sarcastic, bitter remark about the industry, games, or life in general
FF: Improved AI doesn't necessarily mean good AI

Method 7 (desperation): Take any word on page and use anything you can to fill out the folio filler before deadline
FF: When exactly the adjective "hardcore" made the leap from porn to games is unknown

Method 8 (worse than desperation): Some random rap artist at the printer has to fill in folio filler because we were too lazy
FF: Well I'm MCA / I've got nothing to prove / Pay attention, my intention is to bust a move

PCXL Accuses Developer of "Making That Shit Up"

"THERE IS NO WAY THIS COULD BE REAL," SAY EDITORS

Blue Byte announced this month that it has licensed "Kainai's Myrun Engine" in a long-term agreement.

Apparently a 3D engine of some kind, the claim is that it can run "Myrun-powered" games at similar speeds on both a P233 and a P400, with scalable levels of detail.

After a quick meeting, the staff of **PC ACCELERATOR** decided that they hadn't the slightest idea what Blue Byte was talking about. References to the dictionary, the *NY Times Almanac*, and even the Internet (mostly checking Jennifer Lopez fan sites) proved fruitless. "My memory is like a sieve — er, sponge," a senior **PCXL** editor muttered. "They must be making that shit up." **PCXL** did not attempt to obtain comment from Blue Byte itself.

For more stories like this every day, check out our website at pcxl.ign.com.



Blue Byte's *Game, Net & Match* was not built on the controversial Myrun Engine.

The Skinny on Quake III

OK, in every other PC game magazine you hear the phrase "highly anticipated" passed around like hand-rolled joints at a Ziggy Marley concert. But truly, no other title is more anticipated than *Quake III*.

Quake III will completely do away with traditional first-person missions for a more deathmatch-oriented style. The single-player game will not be gone, but will be more of a training mode for online deathmatch play. Like a console fighting game, this mode will let you climb a ladder of ratings against computer opponents, building skills against bots that will later transfer to traditional deathmatch.

The deathmatch mode has been beefed up with better player animations that let you know in an instant what gun your opponent is using, when he is changing clips, and exactly what hand gesture he is throwing your way. Id code junkie extraordinaire, John Carmack, has also juiced up the game's network performance and promises almost seamless journeys into low-ping games for first-time users.

Graphically, *Quake III* promises to be a big leap over *Quake II*. The most noticeable changes include more organic, curved surfaces and far more detailed player models. The new environments have a more frightening *Alien* look to them, and you'll be able to choose from a wide variety of characters including classic id creations from *Doom* and *Wolfenstein 3D*.

New weapons will include a "bouncy gun." Items such as a grappling hook, jetpack, and possibly even a flamethrower are being considered. Another weird concept that may be added is a sports game–like color commentary. Imagine fragging your opponent as John Madden goes wild with the telestrator.

Id has set no release date on the project, and the company coined the phrase "when it's done." We'll be waiting impatiently.



Id wouldn't give us *QIII* screenshots, so here's something curvy.

GAMESCAN



NFL BLITZ

DEVELOPER—> Midway
PUBLISHER—> GT Interactive
RELEASE DATE—> Winter '98
THE GAME—> Not for the sports purist, this arcade favorite football title makes the logical jump to the PC. Thanks to 3D hardware (and bundled with cards like Quantum's Raven Banshee), the game looks about as good as the arcade version. And if you have the right sound system you will almost feel the bone-crushing hits.
IF IT WAS A '70s TV SHOW—> It would be like just about any of the other 350 '70s TV shows that starred Dick Butkus as a tough talkin' ex-football player who's just a big softie inside.



CARMAGGEDON II

DEVELOPER—> SCi
PUBLISHER—> Interplay
RELEASE DATE—> Winter '98
THE GAME—> No game on the market today even approaches the atrociousness of this title. With newly added polygonal road kill and a better physics engine, this game is already a massive improvement over its addicting predecessor. It also lets you kill elephants, which is a definite plus. Banned by the British Board of Film Classification and changed to aliens in Germany add to the must-have factor.
IF IT WAS A '70s TV SHOW—> The only thing as offensive as this game would be the always-frightful "Sonny and Cher Hour."



POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING

DEVELOPER—> Bullfrog
PUBLISHER—> EA
RELEASE DATE—> Winter '98
THE GAME—> The biggest and most impressive-looking of the *Populous* series starts in a time period well before the previous two games. In this title you begin as a magic-making shaman who can call down countless spells on enemies and the game's gorgeous deformable 3D terrain. With fully rotatable 3D worlds for players to conquer, *Populous: The Beginning* is the right step in a new direction for the series.
IF IT WAS A '70s TV SHOW—> It would star Herve Villechaiz as a magical dwarf who is often drunk and always angry. Ricardo Montalban is his sidekick who is forced to run around and make a fool of himself.



AMEN: THE AWAKENING

DEVELOPER—> Cavedog
PUBLISHER—> GT Interactive
RELEASE DATE—> Summer '99
THE GAME—> Cavedog hits the world of 3D shooters with a new game set in (you guessed it) the early 21st century. The title puts players in real-world settings and takes them out of traditional find-the-key-for-the-locked-door gameplay. *Amen* also sets players in what the developers call "acts" instead of levels. These acts are massive environments where players act out the story with adventure game-like puzzle solving.
IF IT WAS A '70s TV SHOW—> It would be "Amen: The Real Awakening," as you watch week by week as a young Jimmy Bakker slowly comes to the realization that he is married to the hideous creature known as Tammy Fae.

GLAMOUR IN THE SLAMMER

Judging by the letters we receive from our many readers, the one thing you want most (following hardware upgrades) is the occasional date. We understand that the truly hardcore gamer doesn't have the time to find, woo, and keep the typical girlfriend, so being the real gamers' magazine we pride ourselves on being, we offer an alternative: jail babes.

Our prison system is chock-full of women who are just dying for a good cigarette and a man to love them. Thanks to the website www.jailbabes.com you can now get a hold of these women (for a nominal fee, of course) and build a relationship with them before they are on the open market. Below is just a sample of the real women and real quotes we found. (Interest Gauge: 0 = no thanks; 10 = yes please)



LA DONNA
RELEASE DATE—> 1/99
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> Impersonating Julia Roberts
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 7
QUOTE—> I enjoy cooking, sports, fishing, skiing, romance, being spoiled, long baths, and nude sun tanning. Another thing, I am very oral.
SUBTLE. VERY SUBTLE.



ANNA
RELEASE DATE—> 3/04
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> Supplying drugs to the cast of "Different Strokes"
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 3
QUOTE—> "I am just sitting here waiting for YOU!"
YEAH. IT'S NOT LIKE SHE'S GOING ANYWHERE.



ELIZABETH
RELEASE DATE—> 08/00
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> Auditioning for White House Internship with local businessmen
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 7
QUOTE—> I am outspoken, honest, loving, positive, and sometimes just a little crazy.
WHAT DOES 'JUST A LITTLE CRAZY' MEAN?



MELINDA
RELEASE DATE—> N/A
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> What do you think?
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 7
QUOTE—> I am sensitive, caring, sweet, funny, giving, intelligent, and SEXUAL. The things I like most are SEX, dancing, and having fun.
DID SHE MENTION SEX?



MELISSA
RELEASE DATE—> 10/00
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> Killing a baker
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 6
QUOTE—> Everyone knows that strawberries and cream are the ingredients for a delicious dessert, but I am sweeter.
WHAT ABOUT A RECIPE FOR FILE CAKE?



SHANDRA
RELEASE DATE—> 3/99
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> Wearing bad prom dresses
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 3
QUOTE—> This very sweet and very sexy flower needs and wants a much older man to help her through this difficult time.
LOOKS LIKE ANTHONY QUINN'S A DAD AGAIN



SARA
RELEASE DATE—> 04/99
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> Cocaine in her cut
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 9
QUOTE—> I am well educated, exciting, and a real people person. Above all I am insatiable.
ABOVE ALL, WE ARE AFRAID.



THALIA
RELEASE DATE—> 4/99
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> Stealing Lionel Richie's hairdo
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 3
QUOTE—> My first interest is pleasing you, then comes skinny dipping, walking on the beach at night, and bicycle riding.
DOES THIS SEEM BACKWARD TO ANYONE ELSE?



TINY
RELEASE DATE—> 2/99
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> Associating with Charlie Sheen
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 10
QUOTE—> I would like a relationship that would expand beyond the imagination.
SO WOULD MOST OF OUR READERS



KAY
RELEASE DATE—> 6/99
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> Whipping a police chief too hard
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 2
QUOTE—> I am searching for that subversive male/female who is interested in proper discipline.
CAN'T YOU FIND THAT IN THE CELL NEXT DOOR?



TONI
RELEASE DATE—> Already out
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> Creating illegal extreme sports
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 3
QUOTE—> Interests include jazz, nude water skiing, and topless snowboarding. I would love to meet people with similar interests.
WHO DOESN'T USE NUDE WATER SKIING?



BRANDY
RELEASE DATE—> 5/99
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> Competing in an illegal topless wrestling league
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 3
QUOTE—> I like outdoor activities and butt-naked wrestling. Don't do anything that you may regret later.
BUTT-NAKED WRESTLING IS ALWAYS SOMETHING YOU REGRET LATER.



OLGA
RELEASE DATE—> 07/99
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> Taking the Oscar Meyer Wienermobile for a joyride
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 2
QUOTE—> Seeking a true friend who is loving, caring, understanding, and willing to do whatever feels good at the time.
THAT'S HOW YOU GOT IN HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.



REBECCA
RELEASE DATE—> 3/99
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> Trying to kill Brooke Shields
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 9
QUOTE—> I want a long-term relationship where we can share dreams and build mountains of love.
IF YOU BUILD THEM, WE WILL COME.



WENDI
RELEASE DATE—> 9/99
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> Bootlegging John Tesh Albums
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 3
QUOTE—> I am like honey; I am sweet, rich, pure, untampered yet very classy.
HONEY WAS ALWAYS BRIAN KNOWN AS THE CLASSIEST OF THE 'STICKY FOODS.'



WANDA
RELEASE DATE—> 7/99
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION—> "Dancing"
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE—> 0
QUOTE—> What I love to do most is dance erotically and being totally nude. Do you want me to dance for you?
HELL NO!

DREAM GEAR REVIEW

MICROSOFT DIGITAL SOUND SYSTEM 80



RATING 7

Waiting for the industry to tap its full potential

Give it a year, add a 3D surround audio card, install the latest game to include all these features, and scare yourself to death with the effects.

On the back of the (admittedly excellent) gamepad and joystick range, Microsoft has now branched into speaker systems. The DSS 80 is an impressive package. The two satellite speakers and subwoofer churn out 80 watts of power with great quality when played through your PC sound card. (The sound quality from audio CDs may make you choose this over your current stereo system — it did for me).

But the point of having a digital system is to take advantage of its digital qualities. Unfortunately, most current PC users won't be able to, and most gamers won't get the most for the money that they will be paying. The DSS 80 is a USB device (Universal Serial Bus — a new, faster, digital connection for peripherals that's becoming more standard with new PCs). This should, in theory, provide a far clearer audio output. Problem is, USB ports don't function unless you're running Windows 98. It will also plug straight into your sound card, but you lose the digital effects.

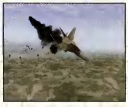
Even if you have Win 98 installed (sorry!) the speakers won't get CD audio if you're playing CDs from a SCSI drive. More importantly, since most games have yet to adopt digital sound support, the feedback during gameplay through the USB digital channel is intermittent. Between skips and plain pauses, it ruins the sound experience.

The 10-band graphic equalizer software package is certainly complete, letting you mess with all manner of functions. But right now, it's all a neat trick that has little use. They're a sleek enough shape and design, easy to set up and control (although the plastic volume control buttons feel as cheap as that bit we did on jail babes).

Retailing at around $250, the speakers are expensive for something you can't currently get the most from. There's no doubt that even through the PC sound card the quality is excellent, but it's the same for other speaker sets for half the price. If you're a tech-head needing the biggest and latest, you won't be disappointed, but you're going to have to wait for developers to catch up to really put the effects to the test.

Microsoft, $250, 800-426-9400, www.microsoft.com

GAMESCAN



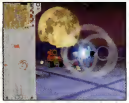
F22 TOTAL AIR WAR

DEVELOPER→ DID
PUBLISHER→ Infogrames
RELEASE DATE→ Winter '98
THE GAME→ *F22 Total Air War* lets players command a squadron of modern fighters in 10 open-ended scenarios. The game gives players total control of both the strategic and tactical sides of a complete air war. Experienced players can take command of air forces in a full-scale war between the largest nations on the globe. On-the-fly tactic change keeps the action fresh for a combat flight sim.
IF IT WAS A '70s TV SHOW→ In the same vein as the concentration camp comedy "Hogan's Heroes," "F22" would be a story of the wacky boys in Flight Squadron 104. Every week they accidentally bomb the wrong country and hilarity ensues as millions of innocents die a fiery death.



EXTREME G II

DEVELOPER→ Probe
PUBLISHER→ Acclaim
RELEASE DATE→ Winter '98
THE GAME→ The first version was a minor hit on the Nintendo 64 and the second offers more hyper-fast racing and wild track design. Players jump on *Wipeout*-style (note we didn't say rip-offs, but we could have) cycles and race on tracks with stomach-twisting drops and mind-bending curves. Hopefully the PC version will be a vast improvement on its console counterpart.
IF IT WAS A '70s TV SHOW→ Nothing is more mind boggling than those variety shows that were so popular in the '70s. Once you've seen the entire cast of *Star Wars* singing a song, surrounded by badly costumed Wookies, you realize why so many people did drugs during that decade.



MACHINES

DEVELOPER—> Chanybdis
PUBLISHER—> Acclaim
RELEASE DATE—> Spring '99
THE GAME—> If any title is in danger of getting swept away by the recent avalanche of realtime strategy games, it is this one. *Machines* is not as flashy and action oriented as games like *Uprising* and *Battlezone*, and not nearly as detailed as cool 3D realtime strategy winners like *Total Annihilation*. The game's draw lies in its cuteness (blah) and the ability of players to jump out of units and sabotage bases.
IF IT WAS A '70s TV SHOW—> It would definitely be one of those grotesque Sid and Marty Kroft "big head" shows that scared many a kid into spending his Saturdays outdoors.



NASCAR 99

DEVELOPER—> Papyrus
PUBLISHER—> Sierra
RELEASE DATE—> Winter '98
THE GAME—> The ever-popular NASCAR series is back with more options than ever. Now players can choose between three separate NASCAR series: Winston Cup, Grand National, and even the truck racing series. With 35 licensed tracks, 60 licensed drivers, and a brand-new physics engine, this game is angling to be the end-all for NASCAR sims.
IF IT WAS A '70s TV SHOW—> It would be based on the "Dukes of Hazard," of course. The series would show the adventures of race car–driving Bo and Luke Duke during that one awful season where they were replaced by vapid look-alikes Coy and Vance.

DEVELOPER SPOTLIGHT

Pandemic Studios



The crew of Pandemic rush to rescue a swimmer's lost bikini top.

You know those L.A. nightclubs that are so hip they don't even have signs on the door? Judging by its barely noticeable studio two blocks from the beach in Santa Monica, CA, Pandemic Studios looks like the next cool place for a celebrity to die of a drug overdose.

The drop-dead gorgeous receptionist, Monica (kind of a cross between Meg Ryan and Loni Anderson), shows you around. With its vaulted ceilings, art department lofts, and cleanly laid-out center area, the company clearly belongs in image-conscious L.A. Here, two teams are cranking out sequels to *Battlezone* and *Dark Reign*, but they still have enough time for fun like the occasional beer-induced work stoppage.

Last month we showed you the struggle and insane hours that take place during the final six months of a game development cycle. This month Pandemic was happy to talk about the other side of the coin, the first six months. At first glance you might think that the start of a project is by far the easiest, but some feel that this is by far the most difficult.

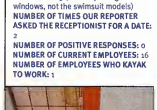
Problems lie in the uncertainty of what's going on. For instance, at this stage of development, the game parameters aren't fully decided. Artists, programmers, producers, and other team members get together at this time, usually with wildly different views of what the product should be. This is the make-or-break point where great games are made and bad games start on their track toward disaster.

If the team does gel (Pandemic is working on two sequels, so its teams are already comfortable with each other), the laborious process of defining a game begins. The programmers begin creating the game engine, while the artists and producers focus on the look and gameplay. Even though the hours during this period may not be as intensive as the last six months, the pressure is amazing because this is where the heart of the game is defined.

The majority of developers prefer the 100-hour workweeks of the final six months of development rather than the frustration of the first six. The guys at Pandemic Studios don't care what part of the development cycle they're in, as long as they can keep making games, and occasionally go to lunch with Monica.

STATUS

TITLES IN THE WORKS: *Battlezone 2*, *Dark Reign 2*
NUMBER OF BLOCKS TO OCEAN: 2
NUMBER OF BUMS ON FRONT SIDEWALK: 3
NUMBER OF WINDOWS THAT OVERLOOK SWIMSUIT PHOTO SESSIONS NEXT DOOR: 5 (and they're big — the windows, not the swimsuit models)
NUMBER OF TIMES OUR REPORTER ASKED THE RECEPTIONIST FOR A DATE: 2
NUMBER OF POSITIVE RESPONSES: 0
NUMBER OF CURRENT EMPLOYEES: 16
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES WHO KAYAK TO WORK: 1



Another Sad Goodbye ...

The tight little family at PCXL lost another staffer this month. The monkey known to friends and family as Rupee wrote many of the better sections of last month's issue, but died horribly this month. She will be missed by all who worked with her, and all those who had to clean up after her. Rupee's passing was the result of a particularly bad outbreak of rickets that afflicted Rupee and two of our best interns.

A sobbing Quintin Doroquez, PCXL art director, said, "I'll never forget her. Near the end, her protruding forehead and depressed rib cage made her look grotesque, but I still loved her like no one else. I will always remember the way she said 'oo oo ahh ahh ahh ooo ooo.' She had a way with the really tender words."

The remaining staff was inconsolable. Both interns also passed away because of the terrible effects of rickets, but fortunately they were only interns and have already been replaced.



Rupee, mere seconds before she threw up her lunch of jelly beans and croutons all over the PCXL staff.

WE NEED NEW INTERNS

Now that we have reached our fourth issue, it's time we started acting like a real magazine. Our first step in reaching that plateau is getting real-life interns. We've borrowed our intern strategy from a very trustworthy source. We went to the highest office in the land and took our cue from the commander in chief (we also managed to take an intern application form). Remember to give a hearty thanks to Bill Clinton as you apply for the first-ever PCXL internship program.

THE ~~WHITE HOUSE~~ PCXL INTERNSHIP APPLICATION

1. **NAME** _____

2. **SEX** M___ F___ (If answer is M, skip to 10)

3. **AGE** _____ (If answer is under 18, skip to 10 unless you look much older or have fake ID)

4. **WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF AS:**
 - ❑ A. Voluptuous
 - ❑ B. Sexy and voluptuous
 - ❑ C. Ravenously beautiful and voluptuous
 - ❑ D. Other

 (If answer is D, skip to 10)

5. **DO YOU LOOK MOST LIKE:**
 - ❑ Girl A
 - ❑ Girl B
 - ❑ Girl C
 - ❑ Girl D (If answer is D, skip to 10)



6. **YOU THINK ~~OVERWEIGHT ARKANSAS POLITICIANS~~ POOR, SOMEWHAT LISTLESS EDITORS ARE:**
 - ❑ A. Unbelievably attractive
 - ❑ B. To die for
 - ❑ C. Sexier than Neil Diamond in spandex
 - ❑ D. Sorry excuses for human beings

 (If answer is D, skip to 10, and if answer is C, well ... you better go there too)

7. **YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH LAWYERS IS:**
 - ❑ A. I am a lawyer
 - ❑ B. I know a lawyer
 - ❑ C. I've heard of lawyers
 - ❑ D. What's a lawyer?

 (If answer is B or C, skip to 10. If answer is A, uh ... forget you ever read this)

8. **HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT CIGARS?**
 - ❑ A. I use three a day
 - ❑ B. One is enough, thank you
 - ❑ C. They are a disgusting habit
 - ❑ D. I don't smoke

 (If answer is C or D, skip to 10. If answer is A, mark the upper right-hand corner of this form with a red star)

9. **HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR FRIENDS?**
 - ❑ A. Sexy and somewhat open-minded sorority types
 - ❑ B. Federal prosecutors
 - ❑ C. Willing to cut a deal with group B
 - ❑ D. Mannish and prone to taping conversations

 (If answer is not A, go to 10, quickly. If answer is A, skip to 11)

10. Thank you for your time, but don't bother filling in any more information. If we need you we will find you.

11. Thank you for your time. Please send us a glossy 8x10 recent photo and a brief essay on your feelings about the pleasurable effects of Altoid mints. We will respond to all letters immediately. Send them to:

~~Intern Underpants Party~~
Interns Needed
c/o PCXL
150 North Hill Drive
Brisbane, CA 94005

Thank you, ~~The White House~~ PCXL

CHRISTMAS CANCELED?



Golden Tee -GOLF- ™

The Perfect Gift Under Your Tree!

Now available at a store near you!



Voted 1998 Most Played Video Game of the Year*



Lightning Fast Arcade Style Game Play



Three 18 Hole Courses in a Variety of Multiplayer Options



TrackSwing™ Technology: Natural Mouse Swing

INCREDIBLE TECHNOLOGIES
www.itsgames.com

Interplay AFFILIATE PARTNERSHIP
www.interplay.com

Incredible Technologies and Golden Tee Golf are trademarks of Incredible Technologies, Inc. Interplay and the Interplay logo are trademarks of Interplay Productions. All Rights Reserved
*Voted 1998 most played coin-operated game of the year by Amusement Machine Operators Association.

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 59



letters@pcxl.com

FEEDBACK

--> Yeesh. Some of our readers are as scary as the people who work here. We appreciate the feedback, both negative and positive. Keep it coming! We prefer email, of course, so send your thoughts to ietters@pcxl.com.

MMMM ... FAN MAIL

Just received your first and second issues, both on the same day. Good content, good reviews, great format, and informative stories. Since I am so and a onetime Viet Nam observation pilot, all these first-person shooters are the reason I bought a computer in the first place. Keeping up with the latest and greatest technology has been tough; you will make it easier. Would you consider doing articles on your readers' machines? Keep up the good work.

— L.T. Vollmer

We'll be happy to write an article on your machine, as long as it has Microsoft Word on it. Please pack it carefully, and send it to: **PC ACCELERATOR**, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94105.

I think your magazine is great! I'm glad there is a magazine that focuses only on violent first-person shooters and other manly games. Being a professional I don't have time to screw around with lame games so I appreciate you can cut right to what matters: continuous references to beer, women, and girly men. I think my favorite article was "Real-Life Camping Spots." I am now constantly looking for camping spots in my building and on the way to work.

Please keep up the excellent work. If there's anything I can do to contribute to PCXL please don't hesitate to ask.

— Dave Kilcy

Hey, thanks! Please send contributions (preferably money, but gift certificates, gadgets, and electronics would also be nice) to **PCXL**, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94105.

THREATS

What is your problem? Nothing! Your magazine is great except for a couple of adjustments we expect out of you. 1.) There is absolutely, positively no good reason for leaving out a picture of Denise Richards this month! As an underachieving college student, I say we must expect better from you guys! You can always do a half-ass review on some lame game such as *Redneck Deer Huntin'*. We all know it sucks anyway, we don't need you to point it out to us in painstaking detail, just make fun of it in smaller print and BAM! You have yourself enough room for Denise and her lingerie friends. 2.) You need to correctly call Lara Croft's new move (*TRIII*) its appropriate name: The Ultra-Atomic-Flying-Backhand-Monkey-Nut-Slap™. We would also like to see this move illustrated in the upcoming edition of PCXL.

If our demands are not met, your precious Pete's Wicked Ale will cease to exist (trust me, we have the resources!). Thank you for your time and your kick-*ss mag!!!

P.S. Put my letter in your magazine!

— Demian Woyciehowsky

We don't normally give in to threats, but since you say mostly good stuff ... OK.

Wow. You guys are totally on crack. Coolness. After I read your first issue I didn't know if I should kill myself or stalk you ... uhhhh ... disregard the fact that I'm still alive.

I went out and got the second issue today, and felt compelled to say hello to you since I live an incredibly boring life and have nothing better to do than send pointless emails. If I can ever drag myself away from my computer long enough, I'll send in my subscription thing, but that could take a while. And if I'm ever in (insert wherever the hell you are here), I will come down and harass you in person, and mock you ruthlessly. Keep me laughing ... or else ...

— Chuck

Whoa, Chuck, it sounds like you're on crack too!

WHOOPS!

In the October issue in the Feedback section (p. 140), one of your readers asks about getting PII 400MHz with 64MB RAM, with Voodoo 2 and 3D audio cards. He was considering Micron's PC with the i740 card, and wondered if it would conflict with the Voodoo 2.

You suggest the reader's best bet is "to still get the computer, sell the i740 card and use your earnings to purchase a Diamond Monster II board." First, if the i740 card was tossed, the system would need another card to handle 2D functions since the Monster board is 3D only. Second, you can order that Micron system with the i740 board (in this case the Real 3D StarFighter) along with a Diamond Monster II board (which is a $249 upgrade). Would Micron sell a system with graphics cards that are incompatible and didn't work well together? I doubt it. In fact, in our extensive testing, the StarFighter/i740 rocks alongside a Voodoo 2 board. We happen to agree the Voodoo 2 boards are the premier graphics solution for gamers, but the fact remains you still need a primary graphics board to handle 2D functions, and the StarFighter/i740 fits this bill beautifully because of its price, performance, and image quality. By the way, awesome magazine.

— Chris Stellwag,
Manager Corporate Marketing and Communications, Real 3D

Early versions of the i740 caused problems in our Voodoo 2–equipped system, but undoubtedly we were wrong. The guy who answered the letter has been killed. Horribly.

In your September TechPhiles section, on page 40, you stated the Matrox Mystique "suffered from very poor 3D performance." Yet, on page 42, your PCXL's PICKS #2 was the Matrox Mystique that "rivals a single Voodoo 2 card with top-notch image quality." This sounds like a contradiction in opinion to me. We in the gaming community look to your comparisons to determine which is the best product to buy, yet this type of contradiction only adds to the confusion. Could you please explain your reasoning?

— Phil Barron

On page 40 we were talking about the Matrox Mystique, which was a deplorable 3D accelerator. On page 42 we were talking about Matrox's new Mystique *G200* card, which is much better and has some wicked D3D framerates and some of the best image quality of any new accelerator.

I may only be Canadian, but even up here in the Arctic tundra we follow the great American pastime of baseball. We are aware that batting .1000 is a guaranteed trip to the minors. Regarding "Lara on Trial" in the October issue, page 24, you state: "Indiana Jones is a major league character who's batting .1000." This is one hit for every ten at bat.

Indy, the MAN, would be hitting 1.000. 1.000 is ten hits for ten at bat. This error probably cost the prosecution the case.

— Simon Caters

Well, the prosecution was actually speaking, so the problem was with the transcriptionist, who we've killed.

INSENSITIVE = US

I am responding to the language your magazine chose to rate one of your computer games "retarded." As part of the effort to end discrimination and segregation it's important to eliminate prejudicial language. Using the

FEEDBACK

word "retarded" is bad enough, using it to rate something as the lowest possible score is insensitive, ignorant, and harmful.

— Dorothy Hull

Um ... sorry. We used the term in the street-slang sense, and did not mean to demean developmentally disabled people. And just for the record, we were rating the one-liners in *Blood II*, not a game.

LARA'S GUNS

Great magazine, but just one question: besides her voluptuous weapons of seduction, why does the "Real Lara" shown on the October cover and throughout the issue only carry two Marksman BB pistols?

—Noah Deneau

Because Eidos wouldn't let us direct the photo shoot — damn them!!

PCXL: FUNNY?

I would like to thank you for sending the first two issues of your magazine to review. I have read each cover to cover. Unfortunately I will not be subscribing. I am an avid, long-time, hardcore gamer who currently subscribes to four gaming magazines. My favorite games are 3D action, RTS, and RPGs, so I should be thrilled with your publication.

I find your attempt at humor to be so sophomoric to be almost insulting to anyone approaching even average intelligence. The constant sexual innuendoes would be great if they were funny, but they're not. The sidebars added to most reviews are crude, have no bearing on the article they are attached to, and are not funny. Either publish an excellent gaming magazine or publish a crude, sexy, sophomoric humor magazine ... this one (like trying to combine two different game genres) doesn't work. I hope there is a large enough market in the high-testosterone 13- to 17-year-old male age group — this is probably the only group [your magazine] would appeal to.

— Eldon Anderson

Uh, Eldon, there are tons of great games that combine genres, *Battlezone* (action/strategy), *Tomb Raider* (action/adventure), and *Rainbow Six* (action/strategy) to name a few. And if you want the same old, same old, you've got already got lots of game magazines to meet your, um, taste. We were surprised, though, to find that many of our readers not only share our sense of humor, but are in fact older males, well past their high-testosterone teenage years and, uh, 20s. Sorry you're not one of 'em. Moron.

DISC YOU'VE DONE ME WRONG

Nice of you to put the info that the CD included with the magazine will not work with Win 98 INSIDE THE MAGAZINE! Since the magazine was wrapped in plastic I didn't know that and bought it to try the demos that I didn't want to download. As a result I think I got ripped off and I doubt I'll buy your magazine again.

— Warren K

You've got one kick-ass mag! The *Quake II* tips were great. The reviews were kicker too. The only problem is that the disc had some errors such as the *Need for Speed III* demo zip was corrupted and, well dammit, I was lookin' forward to it on my 12MB Voodoo 2. Luck to all your next mags. I'll be lookin' forward to them.

— Mayrne

Bear with us, people. The disc, as spiffy as it is, is also new, and as such has some tech issues going on. We have no idea what happened with *NFS III* being corrupted (it worked when we tested it), so we're gonna pass the blame to the people who actually burn the disc. As for Win 98 issues, apparently there was some wackiness for the first couple of discs, but our programmer assures us it's all fixed.

WE SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE

I just wanted to say that I truly enjoy reading your magazine. I think that it's about time a computer game magazine starts speaking to me like my best friend would. I enjoy the gritty language and the fact that you talk about games people actually want to play and not spend an entire issue talking about those crappy fantasy games. It's about time a magazine is published that doesn't think that *Myst* is one of the best games of all time. Personally, I thought it sucked more than any game I have ever played. Anyway, keep up the good work.

— Mark

This is a great magazine. Finally, there is a gaming mag that is not afraid to tell the truth. There is nothing like reading a review of a game like *Rainbow Six* that says what a kick-ass game it is, followed by the burning review of *Redneck Huntin'* or whatever it is called. I had no interest in that game, but I read the review just to see the way in which you rip on such a lame-ass game.

I had one idea, though. What about a game based on John Woo's *The Killer*? That game would kick serious butt. If you haven't seen it, make it the next flick you see, and you'll understand what I'm talking about.

Anyway, thanks for such a great magazine.

— Bill

I bought my first copy of your mag, and to be brutally frank ... it kicks more ass than I thought was even humanly possible. It is exactly what I always wanted in a gaming magazine, even though I was not aware of that fact until after I perused your out-friggin-standing publication. I used to think *PC Gamer* was the bomb, but compared to PCXL, it might as well be *Martha Stewart's Living*. (Actually that was a big-time exaggeration, but I think you get my point.) I would like to tell you all the things I like about your mag, but I do have to go to sleep eventually. Bottom line: Your magazine is indeed a much-needed breath of fresh air, which is why I subscribed to it tonight. Keep saying whatever is on your mind and I'll keep buying. If you'll excuse me now, I have to get back to reading the greatest non-porno mag of all time, PC ACCELERATOR.

— Shawn "Solo" Murphy

FLIGHT SIM = BAD
FLIGHT COMBAT = GOOD
Don't rag on flight sims. They are the best. A good load of bombs and missiles certainly isn't boring. But go ahead and rag on shit like *Flight Unlimited II* and *Microsoft Flight Simulator*.

— Jesse Flauta "FiXXeR"

We're with ya — we definitely cover games that let you fly and kill stuff.

ORDER TODAY!

I love your magazine! I read one in the store and I ordered a free trial issue like in September, hope it comes soon. Anyway I would like to order some PCXL merchandise, and perhaps a subscription. Are the order forms secure? Please reply soon and keep up the great work.

— Dan

Our online order forms for subscriptions are secure (pcxl.ign.com), but if you want to order merchandise, click on the "Be a Groupie" button and follow the instructions to order via fax, mail, or phone.

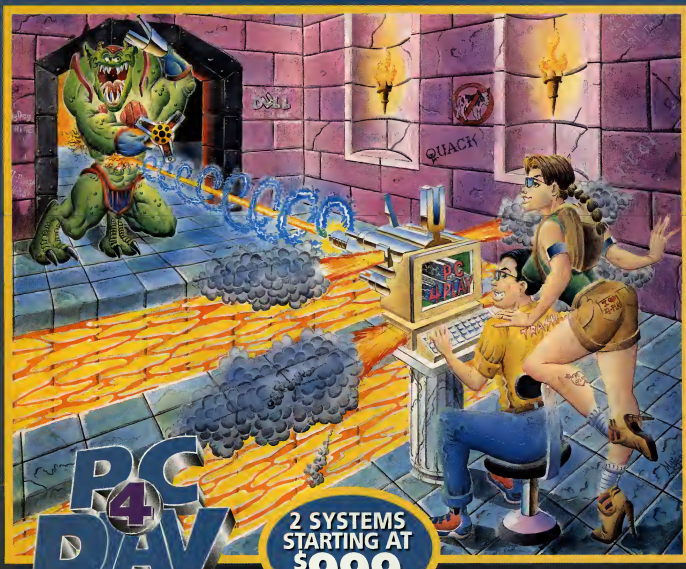
REAL LARA

About the Real Lara Croft: My vote is Krista Allen from "Days Of Our Lives." She doesn't have an accent, but with that body who cares?

— The WolfeMan



PC'S WITH ATTITUDE!



PC4PLAY

PC'S WITH ATTITUDE!™

2 SYSTEMS STARTING AT $999

SYSTEM FEATURES	$999*	$1599	$2599	$3599
PROCESSOR	INTEL PENTIUM II 266 MHZ MMX	INTEL PENTIUM II 333 MHZ MMX	INTEL PENTIUM II 400 MHZ MMX	INTEL PENTIUM II 450 MHZ MMX
RAM	PC 100 SDRAM 32 MB	PC 100 SDRAM 64 MB	PC 100 SDRAM 128 MB	PC 100 SDRAM 256 MB
HARD DRIVE	ULTRA DMA/33 3.2 GB	ULTRA DMA/33 6.5 GB	ULTRA DMA/33 6.5 GB	ULTRA DMA/33 9.1 GB
3D VIDEO	VOODOO I 4 MB	VOODOO II 8 MB	VOODOO II 12 MB	VOODOO II 24 MB
MONITOR	SOLD SEPARATELY	15"	17"	19"

*A K62-3DNOW! 300MHZ processor is also available by special request.

If you're not sporting a rig by PC4PLAY you're not even in the game. Our custom built systems will take you to the edge of the universe and back. Finally, games look and play like they are designed to, not like some jittery handheld toy. This is the real thing, true arcade quality, right in your home.

You don't get this kind of killer performance with just any wannabe *game system*. PC4PLAY gives you the most bang for your hard earned buck! We're setting totally new standards for PC Gaming. Every rig we build from our $999.00 entry level to our custom built jobs has a 3Dfx Voodoo card, gobs of ram, and all the processing speed you'll need to play into the night.

So get off the sidelines and step up to the hottest game platform on the market. Get yourself a PC that kicks butt. PC4PLAY.

Nobody does Voodoo like Weedoo!™

1.877.PC4.PLAY
TOLL FREE 724-7529

WWW.PC4PLAY.COM

All prices and configurations are subject to change without notice or obligation. Prices do not include shipping and handling or any applicable taxes.

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 38

MAGIX

music world



MAGIX gives you the power to create music like the world's top recording artists. ...and the recording industry would have you think it takes musical genius and only a select few can compose and become artists. That's funny! MAGIX has made it simple - there's no experience required.

MAGIX
music maker Del

The DeLuxe version of MAGIX music maker is the world's top selling music creation software! Like an artist choosing colors from a palette, drag and drop digitally recorded samples onto a 16 track arranger. Over 1600 sound, video and graphic files are waiting to be unleashed. **$49.99 ea**

MAGIX Live Act

MAGIX Live Act transforms your PC into a completely new and pulsating live instrument. Play in your house, at a party or live on stage. Three levels of audio-visual performance & more than 700 music and video files. The possibilities are endless. **$49.99 ea**

MAGIX
music studio

A tool for the music professional that puts the power of a studio on your home PC. There's a high performance sequencer with 128 MIDI- and 8 audio tracks, and an 8-track hard disk recording system with numerous effects and editing functions. **$49.99 ea**

MAGIX
add-on's



Each MAGIX soundpool or videopool contains digitally recorded samples in your favorite style of music or video. More than ten "royalty free" samples to choose from. **$19.99 ea.**

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 48

$5.00 U.P.S. Shipping and Handling & accepted

http://www.magix.net

Only for the

Hardcore

Strictly for the

Headstrong

SONIC BOOM $3299

Intel PII 450MHz Processor w/ MMX & 512K Cache
Intel 440BX Chipset 1 AGP, 5 PCI, 2 ISA 100MHz Bus
Dual CPU Coolers w/ Jumbo Heatsink
Thermally Controlled Automatic Cooling System
128MB PC100 SDRAM
IBM Deskstar 14.4GB 7200rpm Hard Drive
Kenwood 40X EIDE CD-ROM Drive w/ TrueX Tech.
LS-120 120MB/1.44MB Drive
or Iomega 100MB internal ZIP Drive
w/ Cartridge & 1.44MB Floppy Drive
Diamond Viper V550 Riva TNT, 16MB AGP
DUAL Diamond Monster 3D II Voodoo2 24MB SLI
Diamond Monster Sound MX300 PCI A3D 2.0
w/ 320 Voice Wavetable, 4 Speaker Output
Cambridge Soundworks Microworks w/ Subwoofer
U.S. Robotics 56K Fax/Data X2/V.90 Modem
Microsoft Intellimouse PRO
or Logitech Mouseman+ 4-Button
Windows 104 Standard Keyboard w/ Palm Rest
Microsoft Sidewinder Force Feedback Pro
or Logitech Wingman Force
Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad
HX45 ATX Mid-Tower Case
Standard Desktop Microphone
Microsoft Windows 98 CD & Manual
DirectX 6, Configured w/ latest Drivers
HyperSonic System Recovery Disk
HyperSonic Starter CD
3-Year Standard Warranty

SILVER BULLET $1999

Intel PII 350MHz Processor w/ MMX & 512K Cache
Intel 440BX Chipset 1 AGP, 5 PCI, 2 ISA 100MHz Bus
Dual CPU Coolers w/ Jumbo Heat sink
Thermally Controlled Cooling System
96MB PC100 SDRAM
Western Digital 8.4GB Hard Drive
Toshiba 32X EIDE CD-ROM Drive
1.44MB Floppy Drive
Diamond Stealth II 8MB AGP
Diamond Monster 3D II Voodoo2 12MB
Diamond Monster Sound M80 PCI A3D
Altec Lansing ACS45 Speakers w/ Subwoofer
TI 56K Fax/Data/Voice Modem X2/V.90
Microsoft Intellimouse
Windows 104 Standard Keyboard w/ Palm Rest
HX45 ATX Mid-Tower Case
17" MAG DX700T .25 1280x1024 Monitor
Standard Desktop Microphone
Microsoft Windows 98 CD & Manual
DirectX 6, Configured with latest Drivers
HyperSonic System Recovery Disk
HyperSonic Starter CD
3-Year Standard Warranty

SONIC STANDARD $2299

Intel PII 400Mhz Processor w/ MMX & 512K Cache
Intel 440BX Chipset 1AGP, 5PCI, 2 ISA 100MHz Bus
Dual CPU Coolers w/ Jumbo Heatsink
Thermally Controlled Automatic Cooling System
128MB PC100 SDRAM
Seagate Medallist Pro 9.1GB 7200rpm Hard Drive
Toshiba 32x EIDE CD-ROM Drive
1.44MB Floppy Drive
Matrox Millennium G200 8MB AGP
Diamond Monster 3D II Voodoo2 12MB
Diamond Monster Sound M80 PCI A3D
Altec Lansing ACS48 PowerCube Plus w/ Subwoofer
TI 56K Fax/Data/Voice Modem X2/V.90
Microsoft Intellimouse
Windows 104 Standard Keyboard w/ Palm Rest
Microsoft Sidewinder Precision Pro USB
Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad
HX45 ATX Mid-Tower Case
Standard Desktop Microphone
Microsoft Windows 98 CD & Manual
DirectX 6, Configured with latest Drivers
HyperSonic System Recovery Disk
HyperSonic Starter CD
3-Year Standard Warranty

MONITORS

$999 21" Hitachi SuperScan Pro .22 1600x1200
$999 21" Viewsonic G810 .25 1600x1200
$499 19" Viewsonic/Optiquest V95 .26 1600x1200
$499 19" MAG DJ800 .26 1600x1200
$349 17" MAG DX700T .25 1280x1024
$289 17" MAG DJ702e .28 1280x1024

check out our web site for instant online quotations. pick one of our eight configurations or build your own.

THIS IS

HYPERSONIC

fully customizable gaming PC's

800.520.0498

www.hypersonic-pc.com

PLAY WITH THIS

All brand names are trademarks of their respective companies.

THE NEXT EVOLUTION

ALIENWARE

-PC Gamer, January 1999

"BOTTOM LINE: If you've got the money to spend, this the gaming system to own"

THE "GREY"

Intel Pentium II 350MHz w/MMX
Soyo 6BA 1-AGP 5-PCI 2-ISA Slots
Intel 440BX Motherboard 512K Cache
Expandable to 1GB SDRAM
PC Power Cooling K-1 CPU Fan
64MB SDRAM (PC-100)
1.44MB 3.5" Floppy Drive
Canopus SPECTRA 2500 TNT 16MB
6.4GB Ultra-ATA Hard-Drive
SoundBlaster LIVE! 3D Sound
Cambridge 4-Point Surround
Speaker/Subwoofer System
Toshiba 32X CD-ROM Player
ATX Full-Tower Case 300 Watt PS
KoolMaxx Video Cooling System
104-Enhanced Keyboard
Microsoft Intellimouse PS/2
US Robotics 56K V.90 Fax/Modem
Windows '98 Operating System
Free Installation & Configuration
of Favorite Games/Latest Drivers

PRICE: $2,099.00

THE "HIVE-MIND"

Intel Pentium II 400Mhz w/MMX
Soyo 6BA 1-AGP 5-PCI 2-ISA Slots
Intel 440BX Motherboard 512K Cache
Expandable to 1GB SDRAM
PC Power Cooling K-1 CPU Fan
128MB SDRAM (PC-100)
1.44MB 3.5" Floppy Drive
Canopus SPECTRA 2500 TNT 16MB
Canopus Pure 3D Voodoo2 12MB
Witchdoctor TV-OUT
11.5GB Ultra-ATA Hard-Drive
SoundBlaster LIVE! 3D Sound
Cambridge 4-Point Surround
Speaker/Subwoofer System
Toshiba 32X CD-ROM Player
ATX Full-Tower Case 300 Watt PS
KoolMaxx Video Cooling System
104-Enhanced Keyboard
Microsoft Intellimouse PS/2
US Robotics 56K V.90 Fax/Modem
Windows '98 Operating System
Free Installation & Configuration
of Favorite Games/Latest Drivers

PRICE: $2,799.00

THE "AREA-51VR"

Intel Pentium II 450MHz w/MMX
Soyo 6BA 1-AGP 5-PCI 2-ISA Slots
intel 440BX Motherboard 512K Cache
Expandable to 1GB SDRAM
PC Power Cooling K-1 CPU Fan
128MB SDRAM (PC-100)
1.44MB 3.5" Floppy Drive
Canopus SPECTRA 2500 TNT 16MB
Canopus Pure 3D Voodoo2 24MB
SLI-Mode Witchdoctor TV-OUT
H3D Stereoscopic VR Glasses
14.4GB IBM Deskstar HD (7200RPM)
Iomega Internal ZIP Drive 100MB
SoundBlaster LIVE! 3D Sound
Intensor Sensory Gaming Chair
Speaker/Subwoofer System
Toshiba 3rd Generation DVD Player
ATX Full-Tower Case 300 Watt PS
KoolMaxx Video Cooling System
104-Enhanced Keyboard
Microsoft Intellimouse PS/2
US Robotics 56K V.90 Fax/Modem
SpaceOrb 360 3D Controller
Windows '98 Operating System
Free Installation & Configuration
of Favorite Games/Latest Drivers

PRICE: $3,999.00

Quality Monitors

17" Viewsonic V73 .26dp add: $315.00
19" Viewsonic V95 .26dp add: $495.00
21" Viewsonic P810 .25dp add: $1,050.00



ALIENWARE

WWW.ALIENWARE-PC.COM

Toll Free: 1-800-494-3382

13398 Southwest 128th Street, Miami, Florida 33186

Product names used in this publication are trademarks of their respective companies.

These sponsors make it possible for PC ACCELERATOR to exist. If they make bad games, we'll slam them. If they make good games, then we'll praise them. Whether they advertise or not has absolutely no influence on our content — this we promise.

Follow these three easy steps to get all the product information you desire!

1. Go to: http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411
2. Select the product category from a complete list. Search by name, or select the vendor's number from the list below for up-to-date info on your favorite games.
3. Follow the format to receive all the info you desire. You will also be able to access the vendor's websites from Gaming 411.

ADVERTISER INDEX

COMPANY	PRODUCT	PAGE #	INFO #
A.I.C.S	Info Systems Prog.	139	
3Dfx	Voodoo 2	back cover	10
Access	Links Extreme	106	70
Accolade	Test Drive 5	36-37	13
Accolade	Test Dive Off Road	72-73	77
Alienware	Area 51	138	
AT&T	AT&T Worldnet	42	73
ATI Technologies	Speed Kills	45	19
Aureal Semiconductor	Demonstration	47	20
Creative Labs	TBD/Insert 8 pg.	Insert	
Diamond Multimedia	Monster Fusion	60-61	22
DreamWorks	Trespasser	12—13	
Eidos	Branding Ad	84	25
Eidos	Thief	inside front	24
Falcon Northwest	Return to Homeworld	50-51	
Falcon Northwest	Computer Systems	80	
Fox Interactive	Alien vs. Predator	32	57
GT Interactive	Blood II	6—7	29
GT Interactive	Dark Vengeance	93	27
GT Interactive	PowerSlide	54	28
Guillemot , Intl.	Speed Busters	96-97	58
Incredible	Golden Tee Golf	132	59
Interplay	Carmageddon 2	15	61
Interplay	Planescape	59	60
LucasArts	Rogue Squadron	40-41	72
Magix	Music Maker	136	48
MicroProse	Top Gun Hornet	77	71
MicroProse	Klingon Honor Guard	29-31	50
Microsoft	SideWinder	8-9	62
Mindspring	ISP	The Disc	
Novalogic	Delta Force	89	36
Pie in the Sky	Make3D Action	105	74
PMC North America	PC For Play	135	38
Psygnosis	Draken	inside back	
R & G Games	Price List	139	
Ripcord	Spec Ops	102	
Sierra	Viper Racing	64-65	44, 45
Silicon Data	Hypersonic	137	
Stealth Productions	Pretzel Pete	101	75
THQ	WRW Nitro	113	76
ASC Games	Jeff Gordon Racing	25	18
Earthlink	Earthlink Network	The Disc	23
Sierra	Starseige/Tribes	17-21	44, 45

Netscape: Student Section

ADDRESS FOR SUCCESS

Location: http://www.aics.edu

Welcome to the NEW AICS Virtual Campus



- Earn B.S. and M.S. in Computer Science
- *INTRODUCING: B.S. program in Information Systems*
- Distance Education
- Object oriented B.S. program
- Follows ACM/IEEE guidelines
- Approved by more than 275 companies
- Thousands of students throughout U.S.

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF COMPUTER SCIENCES

STATE LICENSED AND APPROVED

ACCREDITED: Model Association of Universities and Colleges

FREE CATALOGUE:

1-800-767-AICS

or ***www.aics.edu***

Document: Done

R&G GAMES

2416 N. Mt. Juliet Road, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122

We Buy & Sell New & Used IBM Games & Hintbooks Call 1-800-525-GAME

Fax 615-773-9059 Canada 615-773-9058 Email rggames@aol.com

http://members.aol.com/RGGAMES/index.html More games call for prices:

Used Titles		IF-16 CD	$22
Age of Empires CD	$27	IPlanet 44 CD	$23
Armor Command CD	$22	Imperialism CD	$22
Army Men CD	$24	Interstate 76 CD	$22
Battlespire CD	$27	Jedi Knight CD	$25
Battlezone CD	$27	Lands of Lore 2 CD	$22
Blade Runner CD	$22	Legacy of Time CD	$25
Broken Sword CD	$18	Legends 98 CD	$20
Circle of Blood CD	$18	Longbow 2 CD	$28
Close Combat 2 CD	$27	Lords of Magic CD	$22
Com&Con Red Alert CD	$22	M1 Tank Platoon 2 CD	$26
Curse Monkey Island CD	$25	MAX CD	$20
Daggerfall CD	$27	MAX 2 CD	$25
Dark Colony CD	$18	MDK CD	$24
Dark Reign CD	$18	Mechwarrior 2 Merc CD	$20
Deadlock 2 CD	$25	Mechcommander CD	$26
Diablo CD	$23	Might & Magic 6 CD	$25
Die by The Sword CD	$25	Motocross Madness CD	$27
Dune 2000 CD	$28	Myth CD	$25
F-15 CD	$27	Nascar Racing 2 CD	$20
F22 Air Dominence Fighter	$23	NBA Live 98 CD	$22
F22 Raptor CD	$25	NCAA Football 98 CD	$18
Fallout CD	$28	Nextstorm CD	$23
Flying Corps CD	$18	NHL 98 CD	$20
Forsaken CD	$24	Nuclear Strike CD	$22
FrontPage Baseball 98CD	$18	Outlaws CD	$23
FrontPage Football 98 CD	$18	Panzer General 2 CD	$22
Gettysburg CD	$24	Pax Imperia 2 CD	$20
Heavy Gear CD	$22	Phantasmagoria 2 CD	$22
Hellfire CD	$18	Quake 2 CD	$27
Heroes of Might & Magic 2 CD	$25	Realms of the Haunting CD	$22
Hexen 2 CD	$22	Rebellion (DStar Wars)	$27

Santiarium CD	$30
Seven Kingdoms CD	$24
Soldiers at War CD	$24
Spec Ops CD	$28
Star Fleet Academy CD	$29
Steel Panthers 3 CD	$26
Starship Titanic CD	$29
Tex Murphy Overseer CD	$25
Tomb Raider 2 CD	$29
Unreal CD	$28
Warcraft 2 CD	$18
Warhammer Dark Omen CD	$30
Warhammer Final Liberation CD	$25
Warlords 3 CD	$18
Wing Commander 5 CD	$24
X-Com Interceptor CD	$27
X-Wing Vs Tie Fighter CD	$22
New Titles	
Armored Fist 2 CD	$30
Dark Reign CD	$26
Descent Freespace CD	$36
Die By the Sword CD	$33
Fallen Haven CD	$26
Final Fantasy 7 CD	$39
Grand Theft Auto CD	$36
Max 2 CD	$33
Mech Commander CD	$36
Might & Magic 6 CD	$39
Triple Play 98 CD	$33
Unreal CD	$39
X-com Apocalypse CD	$33
X-com Interceptor CD	$36

Free SHIPPING with purchase of $75 or more Hours 10am-8pm Mon-Fri

Shipping UPS $6 Airborne $11. We accept Credit Cards/Cashier Check/Money Order

Want to sell us your games? Games must be complete with original boxes, CD's & manuals in good condition, working & scratch free. Make a list including your name, address & phone number & under 10 you can call for prices over 10 fax, email or write. Prices are good for 2 weeks. Any unacceptable games will be returned at your expense min. $6 per box Prices & availability are subject to change.

When It's Done, My Ass!

Being the *artistes* that we are, PCXL is fully behind the craft of development winning out over the suits in marketing, but this whole thing is going a bit far. I have respect for 3D Realms, Id, Ion Storm, and other wannabes who can get away with this "when it's done" crap. But come on, imagine if the rest of the world lived by these crazy rules. I mean if we never had deadlines at PCXL, you'd be lucky to see one or two issues a year. Oh they'd be damn good, but outdated. Say you bring your car into the shop and ask when you can pick it up. Tony, the auto craftsman, says, "When it's done." Oh that's nice. If the dry cleaner, McDonald's, Starbucks, and any other retailer played by these rules, they'd be out of business — and rightfully so. I understand an author, artist, or even game developer having to wait for inspiration and not wishing to rush, but the big difference is that these guys are getting paid big bucks by publishers to make these games.



We're sick of waiting for great games, we want them NOW!

I'm not taking the side of the publisher but the side of the consumer. We want these games and we want them now. The sooner they finish with the games the sooner they can get to work on an even better follow-up. Many people criticized *Quake II* for being rushed out for Christmas. I say bullshit. I was happy as hell they released the game when they did; I honestly couldn't wait any longer.

Sure there were bugs and crashes, but the patches came fast and often. And I'm sick of hearing other editors whine about patches, saying "We don't want to be beta testers." Quit being babies, shut up, and play the damn game. I'll gladly take *Duke Nukem Forever* ASAP and accept some of the problems that come with early released software. This isn't an excuse to put out crap games, it's just a plea to put out games, period.

Let's look at *Doikotoro*, John Romero's oft-delayed first-person shooter. The delay is costing Eidos serious cash, which in turn hurts Ion Storm, which cancels a game (*Doppleganger*), which hurts the consumer. If Romero had scrapped the partner business, polished up the title, and put it out right now, he might have a huge hit on his hands. However, each passing month the game is delayed the technology is more dated. Each time another company manages to raise the bar, Romero has to go back to the drawing board with *Doikatana*. This cycle could go on forever. I know John wants to set some new standards when the game comes out, but the longer it is delayed the harder that is going to be.

I don't want rushed games, and I want developers to spend the time necessary to make an experience worth our money. That said, I also want to know "WHEN IT'S GOING TO BE DONE."

— MIKE SALMON

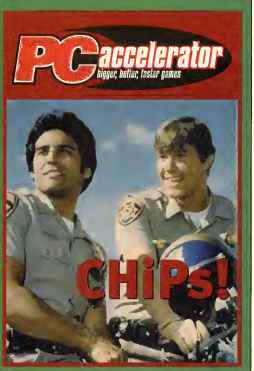
SECOND PERSON

Unbelievable. I don't know how many times I hear someone complain about how games don't live up to their potential, and then hear the same person talk about how he can't wait for those games. It's sheer lunacy. If you want something good, you better be prepared to wait for it. Do you think Michelangelo painted the Sistine Chapel on schedule, do you think that every episode of "What's Happening" aired when it was supposed to, and do you think the first cans of spray-on cheese were delivered to Georgia mini-marts when they were promised? Heck no, but they all were instant classics when they finally arrived.

Art takes time. The games that will truly expand the medium will be the ones created for that purpose, not to hit an arbitrary sales deadline. If we had more developers that adopted the "when it's done" theory we would have better games. Just look at the companies who've delivered games using the theory: Id, 3D Realms, and Epic MegaGames — pretty good track record if you ask me. I would rather wait a couple of extra months for a *Quake III*, *Duke Forever*, or *Unreal II* than have a hundred new *Redneck Rampages* to play right now. And if there is an occasional late game from Ion Storm, Shiny, or another big talker that doesn't live up to its hype, it's OK. The really good games are still worth the wait.

— DAN EGGER

TURN-BASED STRATEGY ROUND-UP
We take a look at the hottest turn-based strategy games on the market including *Civil War Stratogem, Civil War Stratogem II, Sid Meier's Civil War Stratogem*, and *The Boringest Bottles of the Civil War*



CHIPS: THE WORLD EXCLUSIVE
Thanks to wild popular demand, John Carmack and Id have dropped all plans for *Quake III* and have focused their attention on a fully multiplayer version of "Chips." Telemundo fans rejoice as a computer game finally features the talents of Hispanic actor extreme Erik Estrada

GIRLFRIEND SIMULATORS COME OF AGE
Virtual Gretta, the first fully functional girlfriend simulator, makes you watch Bette Midler movies, forces you to view half-naked models and say "nah, she's ugly," and demands you go shopping to try on pants

THE DISC
Pamela Lee and Keith Richards: the movies only necrophiliacs want to see

CHECK BACK NEXT MONTH
The sexiest swimsuit shots of the sexiest talk show hosts of all time, including these three guys





"DRAKAN has pure visual elegance."
Adrenaline Vault



DRAKAN
Order of the Flame



"A choice blend of impressive technology and original gameplay..."
NextGeneration



"DRAKAN has 'play me' written all over it."
PC Gamer



"The flight model in DRAKAN is on par with, if not better than, any flight simulator we've seen."
PC Accelerator











Strap yourself into the ultimate hot seat





www.drakan-game.com

DRAKAN: Order of the Flame, Psygnosis and the Psygnosis logo are TM or ® and ©1999 Psygnosis Ltd. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association. Windows® is either a registered trademark or trademark of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.

DRAKAN

Order of the Flame







This is DRAKAN Order of the Flame™. A fantasy world replete with ever-present danger and the dark remnants of an ancient war. Bonded by an age-old alliance are Rynn, a quick-witted skillful warrior and Arokh, her powerful draconian steed. Together they must embark on a treacherous journey to defeat a dark plot to destroy the world of Drakan.

Experience the thrill of flying through vast, breathtaking 3D worlds. Master 50 different hand-to-hand combat weapons, employ up to seven different spells and rule the skies with five different dragon attacks. Multiplayer support for up to eight players lets you reign supreme over Internet or LAN.

Go to http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411, Product Number 39

Surreal software

PC CD ROM Windows 95

RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PSYGNOSIS



3Dfx
THE POWER OF 2

If you want to raise your PC gaming to the next power, you need the speed and performance of a Voodoo^{2}™ 3D accelerator by 3Dfx® Interactive. With support for over 500 of the hottest games on the market, Voodoo^{2}™ and its twin Texelfx™ processors provide Tri-linear Filtering and Advanced Multi-Texturing to ensure that titles like Madden NFL™ 99 and Half-Life™ perform at blazing speeds and with unreal special effects.

But if your hunger for power still can't be satisfied, then 3Dfx's Voodoo^{2}™ exclusive SLI mode is the missing link. With the ability to connect two Voodoo^{2}™ cards together for even higher frame rates and expanded resolutions, the Voodoo^{2}™ SLI mode wasn't just built for today's games – it was built for tomorrow's.

Unleash the power of Voodoo^{2}™ and put it to work for you. It's the ultimate game solution raised to the power of 2.

www.3dfx.com/voodoo2

Go to http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411: Product Number 10